



COVID CASES DECLINE

The number of new coronavirus cases has continued to decline in Springfield and across Massachusetts in recent days, Page A5

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TODAY'S MUST-READS

BOSTON

More chemical monitoring urged

Massachusetts regulators may need to expand PFAS monitoring into waste disposal, landfills and the atmosphere amid concerns about potential health risks from the chemicals, the head of the state Department of Environmental Protection said Tuesday.

The most recent regulatory updates for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, targeted drinking water. **Full story, Page A3**

SPRINGFIELD

Art museum recognized

The museum where Springfield's cherished Quadrangle tradition began has a secure place among the special cultural tourist attractions in Massachusetts.

The George Walter Vincent Smith Museum placed sixth in an online vote for the People's Preservation Choice Awards. **Full story, Page A3**

SPRINGFIELD

Budget aided by relief funds, casino revenues

Finance Department officials told city councilors last week that a proposed \$755.7 million city budget for the coming fiscal year was aided by federal COVID-19 relief funds and continuing casino revenues.

Councilors met remotely with the city's finance team ahead of council budget hearings next week with city department heads. **Full story, Page A5**

WEATHER

Partly sunny, a shower.
High: 80°; Low: 54°

EXPANDED WEATHER, B4

BRING THE DING
Reader RAVES 2021
Rick's AUTO BODY

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SPRINGFIELD

Amtrak backs east-west rail

\$75B 'vision' lays out national priorities

BY BENJAMIN KAIL
bkail@masslive.com

New round-trip trains between Boston and Springfield are among the expansions and service upgrades proposed in Amtrak's recently announced 15-year, \$75 billion "corridor vision" plan.

The proposal — which would also establish five new round trips linking Boston to Manchester and Concord, New Hampshire — follows positive signals from President Joe Biden, a longtime Amtrak rider whose \$1.7 trillion infrastructure bill called for \$80 billion in Amtrak modernization,

The quasi-public passenger rail company's plans provide ammunition for Western Massachusetts boosters who say a rail link to Greater Boston would benefit both regions.

maintenance and service.

The quasi-public passenger rail company in early April called for long-term investment to bolster existing service, create nearly 40 new routes and reach 160 new communities. Amtrak officials say the moves could help create half a million jobs and serve 20 million more passengers than the 32 million who relied on Amtrak trains across the U.S. in 2019.

Amtrak's release last week of region-by-region plans, including several investments in the heavily traveled Northeast Corridor, came as several local and federal lawmakers continue to pitch expanded rail service across Massachusetts as fuel for the economy. Rail advocates and local leaders say more rail stops would help underserved communities gain access to education, jobs and tourist attractions.

Amtrak says it's committed to build on the state Department of Transportation's study of east-west rail and to work with MassDOT and New York transportation officials "to determine feasibility of service between Boston and Albany," which could lead to two round trips between Boston and Springfield.

"This new corridor service increases mobility
SEE **RAIL**, PAGE A2

REMEMBERING THE 2011 TORNADO | 10 YEARS LATER



Executive director Wesley Jackson says "there was never a time when we thought it was over" after the 2011 tornado heavily damaged Springfield's South End Community Center. The center maintained its youth programs in temporary spaces and opened a new facility six years later. (DON TREEGER / THE REPUBLICAN)

"The tornado happens and we have to shut down. The pandemic happens and it's another shutdown, but because of the tornado we were more prepared. We were ready and we knew what to do. That transition was a bit easier for us because we've been there."

Wesley Jackson, South End Community Center

Disaster, pandemic can't stop community center

Youth programs primary focus

BY ELIZABETH ROMÁN
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Overloaded with his backpack, jacket, mask and latest art project, 8-year-old Logan Tuttle chatted happily about what he loves most about the South End Community Center.

"We just have a bunch of fun," said Logan, who has been coming to the center since he was 4.

Logan has spent not only his after-school hours there, but also full school days, as the center offered supervised remote learning for families who needed child care during the coronavirus pandemic.

The South End Community Center faced hard times even before COVID-19. Its original building, a former armory on Howard Street, was heavily damaged by the tornado on June 1, 2011. It took six years for the center to get its new home on Marble Street. Last year, it was forced to close again, this time for three months due to the pandemic.

"For us it was déjà vu. The tornado happens and we have to shut



Logan Tuttle, 8, has been coming to the South End Community Center since he was 4. He also participated in remote learning at the center during the coronavirus pandemic. (DON TREEGER / THE REPUBLICAN)

down. The pandemic happens and it's another shutdown, but because of the tornado we were more prepared," said executive director Wesley Jackson. "We were ready and we knew what to do. That transition was a bit easier for us because we've been there."

Jackson has been executive director for about four years, but he has been on staff since 2006. He was working the day of the tornado.

"It was a regular day for us with different programming going on throughout the building, and when I saw the alerts on my phone about a tornado watch, coming from the South I knew it was real and I took

that seriously," he said.

Everyone in the building, about 80 people, moved into the basement.

"About 30 seconds later chaos ensued," Jackson said. "You could feel the pressure in the building and then an explosion, and then the roof came down and the windows started to break. Some kids were stuck on the bus and the bus driver on there made sure they got down on the floor. There were scratches and scrapes, but no major injuries or deaths and we are so thankful for that."

Jackson said the staff, including
SEE **SOUTH END**, PAGE A6

SPRINGFIELD

'Encore, not a final curtain'

SSO musicians worried about symphony's future

BY CLIFTON NOBLE JR.
Special to The Republican

The Springfield Symphony Orchestra has not performed at Symphony Hall for nearly 15 months, but there is plenty of noise backstage.

In a statement to the media this week and a separate letter to symphony supporters, musicians have complained about labor disputes, a failure to secure a new contract for conductor Kevin Rhodes, no concrete plans for a new season, a shrinking board of directors and a management committee it claims has "effectively shut down the organization."

"Steering of the SSO organization is now concentrated in the hands of just a few individuals," said Musicians of the Springfield Symphony Orchestra in a May 5 letter to symphony supporters. "Their vision for the organization is to pursue the already failed strategy of shrinking operations in order to avoid drawing on the already robust endowment, rather than to seek new audiences, new supporters, and new revenue that can maintain and grow the concert season."

The musicians added, "Despite welcoming donations from music lovers in Springfield and beyond during this past year's successful development campaign which added funding on top of an already robust \$7.5 million endowment, the SSO Board scrapped plans for outdoor summer concerts, and has no concerts scheduled for the 2021-2022 season."

Symphony management countered Tuesday that the orchestra is emerging from a pandemic that has crippled the entertainment industry and is working to reach a new contract with the musicians' union. A three-year pact expired last year.

"The SSO is planning to offer and present a partial season for 2021-2022, which in turn requires negotiations with the musicians' union in
SEE **SYMPHONY**, PAGE A2



The Japanese Decorative Arts Gallery is a feature of the George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum in Springfield, which has attained new statewide recognition. (DON TREAGER / THE REPUBLICAN)

SPRINGFIELD

Art museum recognized in preservation awards

Mayflower II takes 1st place

By Ron Chimelis
rchimelis@repub.com

The museum where Springfield’s cherished Quadrangle tradition began has a secure place among the special cultural tourist attractions in Massachusetts.

The George Walter Vincent Smith Museum placed sixth in an online vote for the People’s Preservation Choice Awards, which brought recognition to attractions that represent ongoing commitment to history and culture in Massachusetts.

The month-long public vote ended on May 20. It was tough to go up against the eventual winner: Mayflower II, a replica of the iconic ship that brought the Pilgrims to Massachusetts shores in 1620.

As a Western Massachusetts attraction, the George W.V. Smith Art Museum also faced demographic challenges in a statewide vote. Only 14% of Bay State citizens live in the western sector.

The museum still finished ahead of three other locations in the balloting among nine finalists, which were culled from attractions throughout the state. The Springfield museum, a downtown landmark since the 1890s, previously claimed the Paul and Niki Tsongas Award for preserving art from all over the globe, bringing the museum into the modern age and making art enjoyment attainable by citizens from all walks of life.

The Tsongas Award and the People’s Preservation Choice

Award are sponsored by Preservation Massachusetts, which promotes the state’s history and culture.

“The Springfield Museums are so grateful to all the people in Springfield who voted for the GWV Smith Art Museum for the People’s Choice award. The first museum in our city, the GWV Smith Art Museum was known as ‘the people’s college,’ and its founders, George Walter Vincent and Belle Smith, were adamant about sharing beauty from around the world with their fellow Springfield residents,” said Kay Simpson, president of the Springfield Museums.

The museum’s final vote total was not immediately known. Museum officials confirmed its sixth-place finish.

Preservation Massachusetts announced only that Mayflower II, which was ready for the 400th anniversary of the Pilgrims’ landing until the COVID-19 pandemic delayed plans, tallied 27,309 to finish first among nearly 64,000 online votes cast.

The award announcement comes as Massachusetts officials express optimism for the 2021 tourist season. Protocols and safety rules are still in place at most sites, including the George W.V. Smith Art Museum, but the museum has been open since last July.

The easing of general government restrictions, including those on travel, has signaled greater interest in visiting the attractions that were either restricted or closed during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

AMHERST

Lawyer urges resolution in lawsuit over library

By Jim Russell
Special to The Republican

A local lawyer whose focus is constitutional law has called on the Board of Registrars and town officials to resolve a complaint recently filed with the state Supreme Judicial Court by a group of residents over proposed renovations to the Jones Library.

John Bonifaz asked the town to agree that numerous signatures on a petition were wrongly invalidated by the town clerk’s office, enter into a consent decree affirming this with the plaintiffs suing the town, and file the decree with the court.

The complaint before the SJC alleges the town’s rejection of 20% of the signatures flies in the face of a 1971 amendment to state law that says: “if the registrars can reasonably determine from the form of the signature the identity of the duly registered voter, the name shall be deemed to have been signed substantially as registered.”

The petitioners had until April 20 to gather signatures from at least 5% of registered voters to meet requirements of the town charter’s voter-veto provision and force a townwide vote on the library project.

According to the clerk’s office, this meant a minimum of 864 certified signatures, but

only 842 were eligible for certification. The petitioners said they submitted more than 1,000 signatures but that the town clerk’s office improperly rejected one in five.

In his letter to the Board of Registrars and town officials, Bonifaz wrote, “Now that voters whose petition signatures were disqualified have filed this litigation, the Board can opt to settle the matter with the plaintiffs via a consent decree,” or “waste tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars in legal fees.”

“The integrity of the Amherst Board of Registrars is on the line in this case. ... You now have the opportunity to resolve this matter and to vindicate the constitutional rights of Amherst voters whose signatures on this Voter Veto petition were wrongly disqualified,” Bonfiaz wrote.

Asked about the Bonifaz proposal, Town Manager Paul Bockelman responded by email, stating, “We appreciate Mr. Bonifaz’s suggestions. However, all discussions on the disposition of the lawsuit can only take place with the Attorney representing the plaintiffs and the Town through its Town Attorney.”

The Town Council approved \$36.3 million in borrowing for the Jones Library borrowing April 5.

BOSTON

Broader chemical monitoring urged

Excessive PFAS levels found in multiple public water systems

By Chris Lisinski
State House News Service

Massachusetts regulators may need to expand PFAS monitoring into waste disposal, landfills and the atmosphere amid concerns about potential health risks from the chemicals, the head of the state Department of Environmental Protection said Tuesday.

The most recent regulatory updates for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, targeted drinking water because it is already a “well-understood exposure pathway and an area where we could make an important, immediate impact,” commissioner Martin Suuberg told lawmakers and other officials.

Other states have broadened their focus, Suuberg said, adding the department is watching those efforts closely as it plans next steps to tackle the so-called “forever chemicals.”

“We’re mindful of the fact that waste disposal facilities, landfills are areas we might need to be looking at,” Suuberg said in response to a question about expanding monitoring efforts. “The list of areas that we could look at is daunting, but I would say probably you’re right — air is an area that all of us are going to need to take a look at.”

Amid what Suuberg called “growing attention” about the presence of PFAS chemicals, a new intergovernmental task force kicked off its work Tuesday to analyze their impact in Massachusetts and craft recommended steps to limit contamination.

The man-made chemicals do not decompose entirely in the environment, and they



MARTIN SUUBERG

are found in a range of products from firefighting foams to non-stick cookware to food packaging. They have also been found to leach from packaging into Anvil 10+10, a pesticide the state has used to combat mosquito-borne illnesses, creating thorny problems for some communities.

Experts caution that exposure to PFAS can cause health problems, particularly in those who are immunocompromised, pregnant women and infants, Suuberg said.

During the task force’s first meeting, Suuberg recounted recent developments in government efforts to rein in PFAS contamination. A “turning point” came in May 2016, Suuberg said, when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency updated its health advisory with a lower PFAS concentration threshold of 70 parts per trillion.

Massachusetts went even further than federal guidelines. Late last year, the Department of Environmental Protection issued final rules for soil and groundwater cleanup and implemented final regulations setting the maximum contaminant level in drinking water for six PFAS compounds at 20 parts per trillion.

Since implementation of that new standard, which the Boston Globe described as one of the strictest in the country, a growing number of water systems have detected concentration of the compounds at levels requiring notification and response.

Fifty-one public water systems — which range in scope from covering entire towns to serving individual housing

developments — have found PFAS chemicals at a concentration above the maximum contaminant level in at least one test, according to a state online map.

Many of the water systems flagged by the Department of Environmental Protection are municipal departments in communities such as Acton, Bedford, Braintree, Brockton, Cohasset, Easton, Foxborough, Hudson, Hyannis, Littleton, Natick, Pepperell, Topsfield and Wayland.

“Of the 51, most have taken actions to provide their customers with drinking water that is below the standard,” department spokesman Ed Coletta said in a statement on Tuesday, referencing steps such as treating water or tapping into new sources.

In North Attleboro, for example, one well tested above the PFAS threshold and has since been taken out of service by the town’s water department, which is “investigating treatment options for possible future use of the well,” according to the state’s website.

Suuberg said 600 public water systems, including 25 of the largest ones, have been sampled to test for PFAS so far. Most reported no issues, but the department is working with 23 of the community water systems with excessive PFAS levels, he said.

“Each one requires an individualized approach to figure out what the short-term answers will be to minimize PFAS exposure as well as developing long-term plans,” Suuberg said.

Coletta said the Abington/Rockland Water System had implemented sufficient PFAS treatment and then tested below the concentration threshold, pushing the list that Suuberg referenced down to 22.

The Legislature and Gov.

Charlie Baker included funding in two different supplemental budget bills to support sampling for PFAS contamination. To date, Suuberg said, the state has made \$180 million available for 16 projects, mostly through the Clean Water Trust.

Suuberg praised an effort his department undertook in 2018 and 2019 to remove certain older firefighting foams that contain PFAS chemicals from departments, which he said “basically removed 200,000 pounds from the shelves.” He also said officials across agencies will continue to monitor research about the impact of the substances and update regulations accordingly.

“We are going to be keeping a close eye on the development of information about PFAS moving forward,” Suuberg said.

Over the coming months, members of the task force plan to dive into how PFAS impact the environment, who is responsible for contamination and remediation, and what steps Beacon Hill can take to address the growing concern.

Sen. Julian Cyr, one of the group’s co-chairs, said Tuesday that members have “a lot of work to do.”

“Increasingly, we’re concerned that PFAS may affect most every town in the Cape and Islands District,” said Cyr, a Truro Democrat. “We all recognize that these forever chemicals, particularly their presence in the groundwater in a place like Cape Cod or on Martha’s Vineyard or Nantucket — we only have a sole-source aquifer. There’s not another option.”

The PFAS Interagency Task Force, created in the fiscal 2021 state budget via a Rep. Kate Hogan amendment, must complete its work and file a report by Dec. 31.

WESTBOROUGH

Hearings set on hunting, fishing license fees

By Patrick Johnson
pjohnson@repub.com

The state Division of Fisheries and Wildlife has scheduled a series of public hearings for later this month for people to weigh in on revised fee hikes for fishing and hunting licenses planned for 2022.

The hearings will be conducted remotely via Zoom on three successive nights from June 22-24. Each will begin at 6:30 p.m.

For information on taking part in the hearing, go to the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife website.

People may also submit opinions on the fee increases through July 8 by mail to MassWildlife Re: License Fee, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581.

MassWildlife announced two weeks ago that it was revising its original fee hike proposal that called for increases of as much as 77% to most hunting and fishing licenses. Instead of enacting the hike all at once, it was proposed to go with smaller, incremental increases over five years beginning in January.

Under the revised proposal, most hunting and fishing licenses will be increased by \$3.50 per year through 2026 instead of an immediate hike of \$17.50.

Various stamps for the different hunting seasons were proposed to go from \$5.10 to \$20, but will now be raised to \$10.

The original fee structure when it was announced at the beginning of the year was met with criticism, particularly during the public comment period in February and March.

St. Peter Has Just Been Replaced As The Greeter At Heaven’s Gate.



We all hoped you had a lot of years and a lot of laughs left. Andy, we hardly knew Yee.

DARBY O'BRIEN



OPINION

EDITORIAL

Biden budget will restore some balance

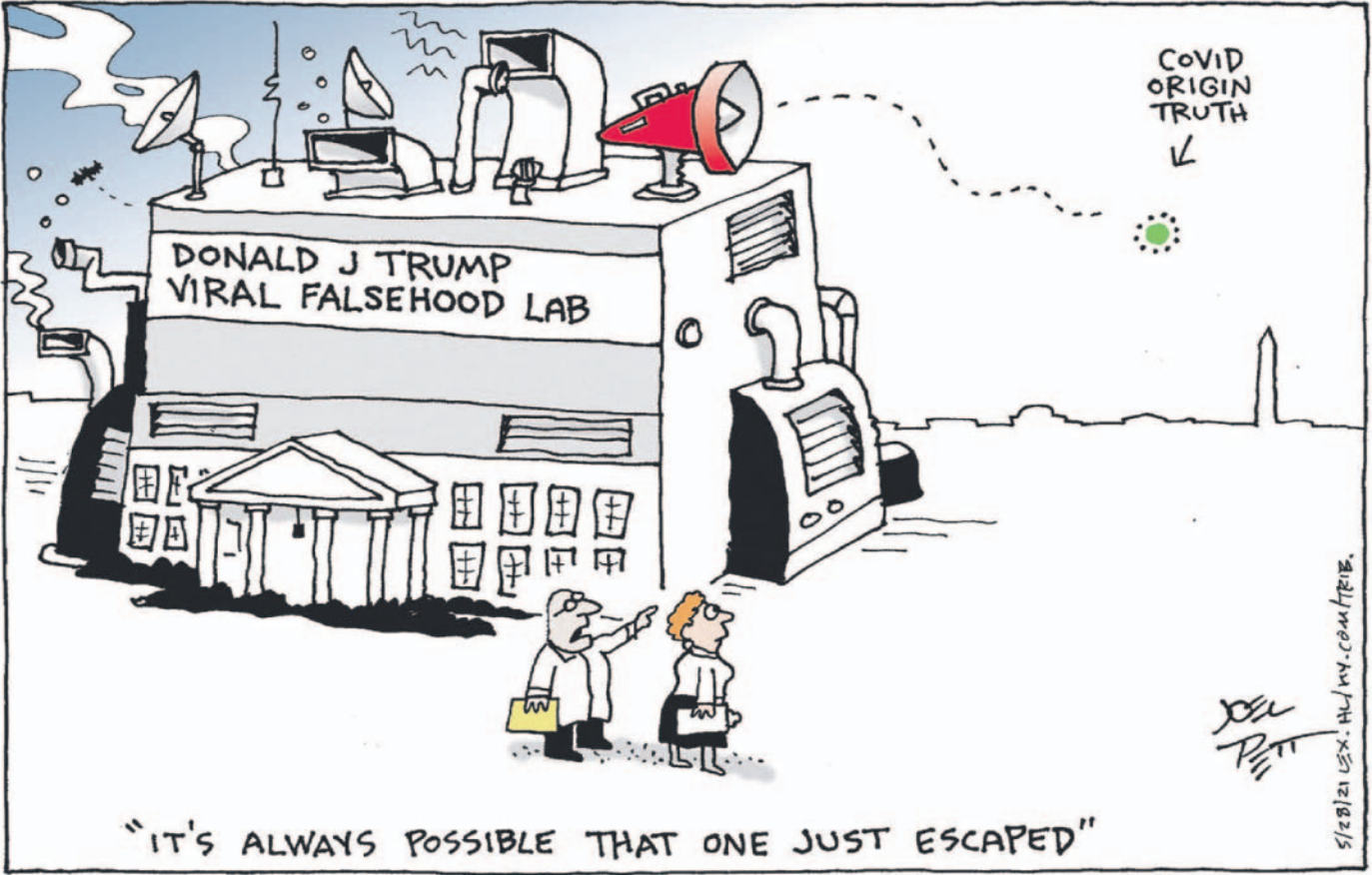
PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN’S PROPOSED \$ 6 TRIL-lion budget for the coming fiscal year is not going to become law. He knows it, both Democrats and Republicans in Congress know it, and anyone who understands even the basics of the process knows it. It’s a blueprint, a proposal, a starting point that shows what our nation’s chief executive wants to see going forward. As the age-old saying has it: A president proposes, and Congress disposes. That’s how it’s always been, even when one party holds majorities in both houses of Congress and controls the presidency. Which is in no way to suggest that a president’s budget is a meaningless document. It sets the stage for what’s ahead, letting both the people and their elected representatives in Congress see where the current administration would like to steer the nation in the years ahead.

Biden’s budget presents a bold vision for what he wants our nation to be, and how he’d like it to get there. A few tidbits paint something of the picture: There’s \$17 billion for repairs next year to infrastructure such as roads, bridges and airports; There’s \$4.5 billion to replace dangerous lead water pipes across the nation; there’s \$13 billion to expand high-speed broadband, allowing more families Internet access. There’s also money for universal preschool, as well as funding to help people pay for childcare and family leave. Republicans, of course, will denounce all of this as so-cialism, which is both silly and perverse. But so be it. Much of what is in Biden’s proposal will be embraced by a broad swath of the populace, and lots of the ideas, modified to one degree or another, will ultimately make their way into the plan that will come before Congress and, hopefully, be passed. It will be neither a short trip nor a smooth ride, but there’s the very real possibility that the Democrats’ vision will transform the lives of much of the citizenry, with the greatest change felt by those who need it most. Imagine that. Less than four years after then-President Donald Trump and a GOP-majority Congress gave steep tax cuts to corporations and the very rich - folks who needed them least - the White House and Democrats in Congress will be looking to restore a bit of much-needed balance. One totally reasonable response is that it’s about time.

EDITORIAL

McConnell tries to hide facts of riot

DID SENATE MINORITY LEADER MITCH MCCO-nnell so enjoy the Jan. 6 insurrection at our nation’s Capitol that he’d like to see another one? If not, then why did he work so hard to block the formation of a bipartisan commission - structured in the style of the Sept. 11 panel - that would investigate the Capitol riot in an effort better to understand how it came to pass and how a similar travesty can be prevented in the future? The answer, sadly, is all too clear: McConnell doesn’t want the truth to come out because the facts of the riot would portray many Republicans in the worst light imagin-able, perhaps dimming McConnell’s chances of seeing the once-Grand Old Party win back the majority not only in the Senate, but also in the House. In other words, he’s willing to put party and power over the preservation of our constitutional republic. This is sinful and must be called out for what it is. A book on the actions of so many in McConnell’s conference could be called “Profiles in Cowardice.” The House passed a bill to establish the ¼ panel, with 35 Republicans joining all Democrats in seeking to get to the truth. But because of the Senate’s filibuster rule that requires much legislation to get 60 votes to pass, McConnell was able to quash the commission. It’s imperative that the citizenry learn the truth of what happened on that tragic day. The short version goes like this: Then-President Donald Trump repeatedly lied about November’s presidential election, asserting, without a shred of evidence, that it had been stolen by Democratic chal-lenger Joe Biden. This fraudulent message was amplified on Fox News and across the rest of the right-wing media echo chamber. And then, on Jan. 6, as Congress was performing what is supposed to be a routine part of its constitutional duty - counting and recording the electoral votes as part of the peaceful transition of power that has always stood as a hallmark of our democracy - a violent mob that had been egged on by Trump overran the Capitol and put a stop to the process. Five people died that day, and the very foundation of our republic was in great peril. We need a full accounting of what transpired. Nothing else will suffice. An insurrection cannot be swept under the rug.



LARRY ELDER | CREATORS SYNDICATE

On reparations: JFK vs. RFK

WHEN DID THE CIVIL rights movement go off the rails? The answer is when pro-ponents went from justly demanding equal rights to unjustly demanding equal results. As to exactly when this occurred, that’s more difficult to answer. But con-sider statements, made five years apart, from the Kennedy brothers, John F. and Robert F. Neither brother was asked about nor used the word “reparations.” But during an August 1963 press conference, a re-porter asked President John F. Kennedy about “special dispensation” for Blacks: “Mr. President, some Negro leaders are saying that, like the Jews persecuted by the Nazis, the Negro is entitled to some kind of special dispensation for the pain of second-class citizenship over these many decades and generations. What is your view of that in general, and what is your view in particular on the specific point that they are recommending of job quotas by race?” JFK replied: “I don’t think that is the generally held view, at least as I under-stand it, of the Negro community, that there is some compensation due for the lost years, particularly in the field of education. “What I think they would like is to see their children well educated so that they could hold jobs and have their children accepted and have themselves accepted as equal members of the community. So I don’t think we can undo the past. In fact, the past is going to be with us for a good many years in uneducated men and women who lost their chance for a decent education. We have to do the best we can now. That is what we are trying to do. I don’t think quotas are a good idea. I think it is a mistake to begin to assign quotas on the basis of religion or race or color, or nationality. “I think we get into a good deal of trou-ble. Our whole view of ourselves is a sort of one society. That has not been true. At least that is where we are trying to go. I think that we ought not to begin the quo-ta system. On the other hand, I do think that we ought to make an effort to give a fair chance to everyone who is qualified, not through a quota, but just look over our employment rolls, look over our areas where we are hiring people, and at least make sure we are giving everyone a fair chance, but not hard and fast quotas. We are too mixed, this society of ours, to begin to divide ourselves on the basis of race or color.” That same year, National Urban League executive director Whitney Young proposed a 10-year “domestic

Marshall Plan” for Blacks to make up for past discrimination. His board of directors opposed it. The president of the Pittsburgh Urban League chapter said the public would ask: “What in blazes are these guys up to? They tell us for years that we must buy (nondiscrimina-tion) and then they say, ‘It isn’t what we want.’” Five years later, Sen. Robert Kennedy announced his candidacy for president. He said: “I run to seek new policies — policies to end the bloodshed in Vietnam and in our cities, policies to close the gaps that now exist between Black and white.” “Policies to close the gaps that now exist between Black and white”? In 1940, 87% of Blacks lived below the poverty level. By 1960, that number dropped to 47%, a 40-point drop in 20 years, the greatest 20 years of economic growth for Blacks in American history. Brown vs. Board of Ed-ucation, which struck down “separate but equal,” was not decided until 1954. This sharp decline in Black poverty preceded the Civil Rights Act of 1964. John Kennedy was right. We cannot undo the past. But by teaching Blacks to see themselves as victims deserving of “reparations” from today’s white “oppressors,” we can certainly make the present and future worse.

MATT WELCH | LOS ANGELES TIMES

#NeverTrump party? Good luck with that

JUST AS MAY FLOWERS FOLLOW April showers, so too do presidential campaigns fertilize the political soil for fanciful, post-election dreams of sprouting viable new third parties. “We ... declare our intent to catalyze an American renewal,” wrote 150 mostly Republican ex-politicians and securi-ty-state veterans on May 13 in a breath-less joint letter, “and to either reimagine a party dedicated to our founding ideals or else hasten the creation of such an alternative.” This new movement, posited co-found-ers Evan McMullin and Miles Taylor in a follow-up Economist essay, seeks either to wean the GOP from its “cult of personality” around Donald Trump or to “unify American voters who have been rendered politically homeless into a new political tribe — a resistance movement of ‘rationals’ against ‘radicals.’” Well, good luck with that. Political in-dependents are a fractious bunch. Build-ing third parties from scratch without benefit of money or celebrity is an almost unfathomably dreary slog, and the last five-plus years of Republican politics has produced a series of humiliations for the #NeverTrump right. If the American Renewal founders’ names sound vaguely familiar, it’s because they are two of the many an-ti-Trump bugs that have splatted on the windshield of Make America Great Again. McMullin, an ex-CIA officer, mounted a late-breaking independent presiden-tial run in 2016, finishing in fifth place with 0.5% of the vote. Taylor, a former Department of Homeland Security chief of staff, made a media stir in 2018 with an anonymous New York Times op-ed titled “I Am Part of the Resistance Inside the Trump Administration.” Few people could pick the two men out of a police lineup; meanwhile, Trump remains by far the most popular politician in the party. Joining McMullin and Taylor are several other signatories who’ve tangled with Trump and lost: former 2016 Jeb Bush strategist Mike Murphy, short-lived White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci, and the “three stooges” (in Trump’s derisive words): Bill Weld, Joe Walsh and Mark Sanford. They ran against the 45th president in the 2020 GOP primaries and lost the popular vote by a combined 93 percent-age points. Reforming the Republican Party from within seems a tall order at a time when half the GOP congressional delega-tion voted against certifying the 2020 presidential election, and when last names such as Cheney and Romney are radioactive. So what about some new Third Way? Here’s where the odds really get long. “At the risk of understatement,” Joe Bishop-Henchman, chair of the 50-year-old Libertarian Party told me in January, “starting a new political party is very hard. It requires a lot of money, a lot of work, a lot of volunteers.” Would-be newcomer partyers are at a massive fundraising disadvantage from the jump. The Federal Elections Com-mission only allows parties with “na-tional committees” to accept individual donations as high as \$35,000; the rest have to make do with checks for \$5,000 apiece. In order to be recognized by the FEC as having a national committee, parties must jump through all kinds of hoops, such as holding a national conven-tion and running a “sufficient number of party-designated federal candidates on the ballot in a sufficient number of states in different geographic areas.” Now, you may believe as I believe that such rules are unfair, but let’s remember who writes them: officials elected and appointed by the two major political parties that together have combined for at least 97% of the presidential vote in 18 of the last 24 elections, including four of the last five. And as we’ve seen from 2021 controversies in states as varied as Georgia and New York, the partisan wrangling over re-writing election law

has become an ugly exercise in brute political strength. I, too, would love to see a Republican Party that moves on from and repudiates the worst aspects of Donald Trump. But then again, I’m not a Republican. The 74 million people who voted for the guy in 2020 are not likely to be persuaded by haughty ex-spooks and 1990s reform governors threatening to hold their breath until enough people declare Or-ange Man Bad. With every week come new develop-ments — the debate over a launching a bipartisan Jan. 6 commission, for exam-ple — reminding us, with the ever-able assistance of the media, that many Republicans will continuously warp their principles to stay professionally viable while Trump’s spell on the party still holds. It isn’t pretty to watch. But nor is looking the other way as a Demo-cratic-run Washington zooms through record spending bills without much in the way of scrutiny. If it’s true that Republicans can’t quite quit Trump, it may also be true that neither can the media nor the #Never-Trump right. As evidenced by the fundraising prowess of the Lincoln Project, the Trump-tweaking political action com-mittee, several of whose co-founders have signed onto American Renewal, there is a market out there for selling Democrats the dream of a fractured GOP. As if on cue, the new movement has already been invited onto MSNBC and saluted by Stephen Colbert. Turns out that’s the easy part. Ask the 35 GOP House members who voted for the Jan. 6 commission whether they think the “rationals” will soon win over the “radicals.” As for a meaningful new party, even McMullin and Taylor acknowledge “it would be the Mount Everest of political challenges.” If American Renewal is going to be more than a fundraising vehicle, better start climbing now.

The Republican.

Established in Springfield, MA, September 8, 1824

George Arwady
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Cynthia G. Simison
Executive Editor

Robert Genest
Manager, Reader Engagement

Raymond E. Kelly Jr.
Managing Editor

David Starr
President 1977-2019
In Memoriam

MASSACHUSETTS CORONAVIRUS CASE TRACKER

Deaths	Tested	Positives	US deaths	US positives
17,520	22,963,891	661,294	595,205	33,286,129

Last update: June 1, 2021 | Sources: Massachusetts Department of Public Health; Johns Hopkins University

SPRINGFIELD

COVID cases continue decline

By Peter Goonan
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The number of new coronavirus cases has continued to decline in Springfield and across Massachusetts in recent days.

Springfield officials reported 118 new cases of COVID-19 for the week of May 23-29. That compares to 156 new cases the prior week, representing a 24.4% decrease, according to statistics released by the city’s Department of Health and Human Services and mayor’s office.

“It appears the city is headed in the right direction,” said health commissioner Helen Caulton-Harris. “We’re seeing a steady decrease in new cases.”

Statewide, health officials reported 179 new COVID-19 cases on Tuesday after no new data was reported on Memorial Day. There were an estimated 5,918 active cases Tuesday, down from 24,631 on May 1 and a high of 98,750 on Jan. 18.

State officials also reported another 12 COVID-related fatalities, bringing Massachusetts’ death toll from the pandemic up to 17,520.

There were no new reported deaths from COVID-19 among Springfield residents for the fifth consecutive week, Caulton-Harris said. However, the death reports are not up to date, meaning there could be some deaths not yet officially reported, she said. Springfield’s COVID-19 death toll stands at 246 since the pandemic began.

Caulton-Harris and Mayor Domenic J. Sarno said the increase in vaccinations is helping to provide the im-



“You can see by that data that the city of Springfield, as far as those fully vaccinated, lags behind the average for the state significantly.”

Helen Caulton-Harris, health commissioner

proving news on COVID-19, but noted that Springfield still lags significantly behind vaccination rates statewide.

Some 25.3% of Springfield residents under the age of 65 were fully vaccinated as of Friday, as compared to 44.4% statewide for that age group, Caulton-Harris said. City residents 65-74 are 70.4% vaccinated, as compared to 81.4% statewide, she said.

“You can see by that data that the city of Springfield, as far as those fully vaccinated, lags behind the average for the state significantly,” Caulton-Harris said.

The latest statistics were posted on the city’s website on Tuesday afternoon. The city had been conducting updates on COVID-19 every Monday at City Hall, but Sarno, citing the decline in new cases, hosted the last one May 24.

The city will continue to lobby for more people to get COVID-19 vaccinations, including working with other organizations and providing neighborhood sites and strategic events, Sarno said. In addition, the vaccination program has been expanded to include students, officials said.

Sarno announced last week that City Hall and other municipal buildings were

opening to the public. On Tuesday, he said he expects that city libraries will reopen soon, and that senior centers will follow sometime later.

There are 225 Massachusetts patients hospitalized with COVID-19, down from 236 reported over the weekend. That includes 77 in intensive care, and 38 who are intubated, data shows.

On Sunday, Baystate Health reported having 26 patients with confirmed COVID-19, with five being treated in critical care units. It had 27 patients with COVID-19 a week earlier, and cases have been declining significantly in recent weeks.

The state’s seven-day average rate of positive COVID-19 tests is now 0.68%, up slightly from the 0.66% last reported on Sunday, which was a record low.

There have been 661,294 COVID-19 cases confirmed in Massachusetts since the pandemic began more than a year ago.

There have been a total of 7,862,416 COVID vaccine doses administered in Massachusetts to date, and 3,672,088 residents are now fully vaccinated. Roughly 60% of the state has received at least one dose, and 52% is fully vaccinated.

MassLive.com’s Tanner Stenig contributed to this report.

SPRINGFIELD

Budget aided by COVID relief funds and casino revenues

Hearings next week on mayor’s \$755M spending plan

By Peter Goonan
pgoonan@repub.com

Finance Department officials told city councilors last week that a proposed \$755.7 million city budget for the coming fiscal year was aided by federal COVID-19 relief funds and continuing casino revenues.

Councilors met remotely with the city’s finance team ahead of council budget hearings next week with city department heads.

Councilor Timothy Allen, a member of the council Finance Committee, praised the budget presentation, saying it provides a “good start to our discussions.”

“Definitely, the mayor and finance team did a good job of presenting the budget after a difficult year,” Allen said. “There is some opportunity to recover some of our COVID losses.”

The fiscal 2022 city budget recommended by Mayor Domenic J. Sarno takes effect July 1. The council can approve it as is or make cuts. The council does not have the power to add to the proposed budget.

For the seventh consecutive year, the city is not taking funds from its stabilization reserve “rainy day” fund to help balance the budget, officials said. There is about \$43.5 million in the reserve fund.

The city is able to use some of its federal relief funds under the American Rescue Plan to help balance the budget for lost revenues during the pandemic, said Lindsay

“Definitely, the mayor and finance team did a good job of presenting the budget after a difficult year. There is some opportunity to recover some of our COVID losses.”

City Councilor Timothy Allen

Hackett, the city’s deputy chief administrative and financial officer. Specifically, the city was able to budget \$12.1 million in new federal COVID-19 relief toward the proposed budget, she said.

The city expects to receive at least \$93.8 million, and possibly as much as \$123 million, under the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan. But it is initially cleared for just the \$12.1 million for budget expenses related to the pandemic, officials said.

Chief administrative and financial officer Timothy J. Plante said there are lengthy, complex regulations for the future use of the federal aid. In March, he said the millions of dollars will have a “transformative” effect on Springfield, including covering budget expenses and further aiding businesses, residents and nonprofit organizations harmed by the pandemic.

In addition, the city was able to use \$16.6 million in its annual revenues from MGM Springfield to help balance the fiscal 2022 budget, Hackett said.

Specifically, the city was able to use \$13.8 million required annually under MGM’s host community

agreement, \$2.5 million in community impact funds, and \$350,000 from its gross gaming revenues tax, she said. An additional \$2.5 million community development grant from MGM goes for that general purpose rather than the city budget.

The fiscal 2022 city budget reflects an increase of 3.9% over the current budget. The \$755.7 million budget includes \$477.9 million for the School Department and \$249.7 million for municipal departments and expenses.

The Finance Department said highlights of the city budget include:

- no layoffs or cuts in essential services
- reestablishment of \$250,000 for early childhood education under the city general fund
- continued investment in public safety including body-worn cameras for all police officers, upgraded information infrastructure, increased ShotSpotter coverage areas
- library, parks and recreation programming, summer programming, sidewalk and street maintenance, terrace landscaping, and added funds for stump removal

Remote budget hearings are scheduled June 8 and 9 at 5:30 p.m. Top officials from the city’s 29 municipal departments will participate.

The American Rescue Plan funds can be for various purposes including supporting public health expenses related to COVID-19, to address negative economic impacts, to replace lost public sector revenue, to provide premium pay for essential workers, and to invest in water and sewer and broadband infrastructure, according to a federal summary.

BOSTON

Pot greenhouses not so green

Bill encourages outdoor growing by allowing organic pesticides

By Colin A. Young
State House News Service

Indoor cultivation of cannabis is responsible for about 10% of all industrial electricity consumption in Massachusetts, a representative from the Northeast Sustainable Cannabis Project estimated Tuesday as he called on lawmakers to allow marijuana and hemp growers to use organic farming practices that could shift some of the cultivation outside and under the sun.

Indoor cannabis cultivation gives growers a more predictable (and potentially more profitable) environment but is an energy-intensive operation — powerful lights help the plants grow and ventilation systems work to maintain temperature and humidity settings around the clock. Sanford Lewis, general counsel for the Amherst-based group, said the spread of energy-hungry indoor cultivation centers runs counter to the state’s recent climate law and its greenhouse gas reduction goals.

He told the Joint Committee on Cannabis Policy that his estimate that indoor cultivation accounts for 10% of industrial electricity consumption is based on current indoor cultivation lighting standards and the assumption that half of the growing canopy square footage authorities have authorized is being used. Senate co-chair Sonia Chang-Diaz called the projection “remarkable.”

“Since the cannabis sector could triple in size by the time supply and demand level out, the impact is likely to be quite a bit larger,” Lewis said. “So this means that just as other industries are working hard to curtail their climate impacts, energy-intensive indoor cannabis has come along to undermine the Massachusetts

“Just as other industries are working hard to curtail their climate impacts, energy-intensive indoor cannabis has come along to undermine the Massachusetts goal of reducing greenhouse gasses emitted..”

Sanford Lewis, Northeast Sustainable Cannabis Project

goal of reducing greenhouse gasses emitted.”

The Cannabis Control Commission has authorized more than 1.1 million square feet of indoor marijuana cultivation compared to up to 285,000 square feet of outdoor cultivation, according to its licensing data, and has imposed energy standards on indoor cultivators.

In 2018, the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources said the energy it would take to power grow lights for 660,000 square feet of cannabis canopy could negate the energy-saving effect of its \$11 million program to convert more than 130,000 streetlights statewide to LEDs.

Lewis was among those who pressed the Cannabis Policy Committee on Tuesday to support a bill (H.168) filed by Rep. Paul Mark, D-Peru, to allow hemp and marijuana growers to use biological and botanical pesticide products that are considered appropriate for organic farming.

Jon Piasecki, who said he is the smallest recreational cannabis farmer licensed to operate outdoors in Massachusetts, said he and other outdoor growers run into a lot of problems with a powdery mildew fungus and another fungus that causes bud rot. Cannabis Control Commission regulations will not allow growers to combat those issues using anything other than products included on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s so-called 25(b) list.

“Some of those are marginally effective. One that I would very much like to use is on the inert list. It’s called potassium bicarbonate and

it’s commonly used throughout all organic practice across the country, extensively in cannabis. ... Again, it’s on the 25(b) inert list and I still can’t use it,” he said. “I implore you to please consider allowing us farmers to use really what every other farmer who is practicing organic agriculture in the country can use.”

Mark’s bill would direct the Department of Agricultural Resources and its Pesticide Board to authorize the use of “biological and botanical pesticide products that are considered appropriate for organic farming, provided that the EPA allows application of the product’s active and inert ingredients on food and tobacco crops and has not established a federal tolerance limit.”

Lewis said Colorado, California and Oregon already allow marijuana growers to use organic products, and Mark’s bill specifically directs the Department of Agricultural Resources to consider the regulations in those three states. The bill also has support from the Northeast Organic Farming Association.

“The current Massachusetts regulatory environment, including misguided Pesticide Board constraints addressed by this bill, is driving cannabis indoors and therefore driving up greenhouse gas emissions,” he said.

Last summer, the Cannabis Control Commission fined Garden Remedies \$200,000 after investigators found that the company had been using the banned pesticide Clonex Rooting Gel since December 2017, and fined Healthy Pharms \$350,000 for a subsequent pesticide use offense, the Boston Globe reported.

WORCESTER

State launches pot delivery license

By Colin A. Young
State House News Service

After years of stops and starts, the Cannabis Control Commission announced Friday that eligible applicants can now seek precertification and licensure as marijuana delivery operators, a business type that regulators and advocates said will be an important part of an equitable industry.

The new “marijuana delivery operator” licenses, created in the new industry rules the commission approved late last year, will be available exclusively to participants in the social equity program and economic empowerment applicants for the first three years. The new license allows its holder to buy products wholesale from growers and manufacturers and deliver them to their own customers, and requires them to follow customer verification and safety regulations.

“The release of this application serves as an important step in acknowledging the excessive hurdles that many people of color and those disenfranchised face when it comes to starting a cannabis business,” said Aaron Goines, president of the Massachusetts Cannabis Association for Delivery. “This license type is a major piece of the equation in making the Massachusetts cannabis industry more diverse, equitable and inclusive.”

The commission said there are 122 certified economic empowerment applicants and nearly 400 social equity program participants who are eligible for the new delivery license, which was “created in direct response to a robust public hearing and public

comment process” last year.

The commission has issued one final license and seven provisional licenses for the second prong of its delivery structure, a courier model that allows a company to charge a fee to make deliveries from licensed retailers and dispensaries. Home delivery of marijuana has long been allowed under the state’s medical marijuana program, and the commission considered and debated nonmedical home delivery for about three years.

Advocates argue that delivery-only licenses will help level the playing field be-

tween large corporations and small businesses because the barriers to entry for delivery are less burdensome than those for retail licenses. Some existing marijuana retailers rejected the idea and sued the commission over its delivery policy before dropping the suit amid backlash.

“I applaud the Commissioners, staff, and members of the public who envisioned this license type and worked hard to streamline the application and make it as accessible as possible,” commission executive director Shawn Collins said.

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“Two or three days after the tornado we had our annual golf tournament fundraiser. At that event, our board chairman at the time said we would rebuild by any means necessary, and those were the marching orders from the start. We were going to make it work.”

WESLEY JACKSON, SOUTH END COMMUNITY CENTER



The \$10.3 million, 28,000-square-foot South End Community Center opened in 2017. (DON TREEGER / THE REPUBLICAN)



A wrecking crew takes down a tornado-damaged building at 37 Howard St. in Springfield in 2013. The former South End Community Center stands in the background. (THE REPUBLICAN FILE PHOTO)

South End

CONTINUES FROM PAGE A1

former executive director Patrice Swan, and the center’s board of directors immediately started planning how they could continue to serve students while decisions were made about the damaged building.

“We worked with (the federal and state emergency management agencies) and our insurance as well as the city. It was months of meetings, but during that time we still had to serve kids,” he said.

The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, Northern Educational Service and Bay Path University were a few of the organizations that offered to help. The city offered school buildings for programming. Administrative staff worked out of a trailer until they relocated to space on East Columbus Avenue.

For six years the community center operated this way until the new \$10.3 million facility opened in 2017. The old community center was purchased by MGM Springfield and renovated before its grand opening in 2018. Before the pandemic the building was being used as a small entertainment venue with additional meeting spaces.

“Two or three days after the tornado we had our annual golf tournament fundraiser. At that event, our board chairman at the time said we would rebuild by any means necessary, and those were the marching orders from the start. We were going to make it work. There was never a time when we thought it was over. We had to be resilient,” Jackson said.

Today the center serves more than 200 children who participate in athletic programs including basketball, baseball, soccer and volleyball. The remote learning program has about 60 students, and there are about 40 in the after-school programs. A teen program serves 50 kids, and the upcoming summer camp, which is eight weeks of programming, will serve about 300 children.

The center’s indoor and outdoor basketball courts and fitness equipment are also available to the public. “They can pay \$1 or \$2 to come in and use the court for the day



Teens shoot around on the basketball court at the South End Community Center in Springfield on May 17.

(DON TREEGER / THE REPUBLICAN)

or to use the gym,” Jackson said.

When the pandemic hit, Jackson said, many community organizations met to discuss how they would serve children whose families had jobs that required them to go in regardless of quarantine.

“There was a definite need. We know families who don’t have reliable internet or it’s hard for them to be home because they have to go to work, so it was an automatic decision,” he said.

Logan has adapted to remote learning and said being at the community center has given him the chance to hang out with other kids. His family has opted to let him finish out the school year doing remote learning at the center.

“When I come here I get to have fun and make new friends and I get to see Ms. Rocky every day,” Logan said, referring to Raquel “Rocky” Rivera, the after-school programming coordinator.

“You definitely have to have a lot of patience,” she said, laughing. “It was very challenging at first with school being online. It was new to them just as it was new to us, but we were able to work through all of that and communicate with the teachers to help us get through it.”



A student and staff member have a view of Springfield’s South End neighborhood as they work on a project at the community center on May 17. (DON TREEGER / THE REPUBLICAN)

The community center works with many kids in the care of the state Department of Children and Families. Rivera said those children need some sense of stability, which the community center provides.

“I want to be here to show them that there are people who care and to give them that love that they are missing sometimes,” she said. “Ev-

eryone calls me their second mom here.”

Rivera started as a receptionist at the center 15 years ago, later becoming a counselor. She said the center has brought her professional fulfillment.

“I always wanted to be a teacher, and this comes close to that,” she said.

Jackson, Rivera and the rest of the staff work to ensure

families — not just the kids — feel welcome at the center. With the South End Citizens Council and the C3 policing unit, they’ve hosted movie nights, community basketball games and informational sessions.

Police officer Anthony DiSantis, part of the C3 unit, said the community center is a nice environment where officers and youth

ABOUT THE SERIES

After the Storm is a 10-year retrospective of the communities ravaged by the June 1, 2011 tornado, the lives impacted and how Western Massachusetts rebuilt. Here’s a look at some of the key stories, which will appear in *The Republican* and on MassLive:

Sunday: During a violent 70 minutes, lives and the very look of western and central Massachusetts were forever changed.

Monday: The tornado transformed Springfield’s South End, literally clearing the way for MGM Springfield.

Tuesday: Rebuild Springfield is credited with new and renovated housing, restored parks and roadways.

TODAY: It took six years after the tornado, but the South End Community Center found itself a new home.

Thursday: With the help of federal funds, Pope Francis Preparatory School was built from the rubble of Cathedral High School.

Friday: Friendships formed in adversity remain a decade after the tornado ravaged Brimfield and surrounding towns.

Saturday: A West Springfield business owner still gets nervous when the wind and rain pick up in the Merrick neighborhood hit hard by the tornado.

can interact and develop trust.

“We can talk to them about bike safety and things to be aware of when they are walking to and from school, even simple topics like crossing the road. We try to touch even on the little things,” he said.

Moving forward, Jackson hopes to engage a new generation of pre-teens who missed out on the community center when they were 5 or 6 years old and the tornado destroyed the original building.

“We want to reach a larger audience and offer more community-based neighborhood services like we did before the pandemic,” he said. “We are hitting social media hard and we are pounding the pavement too to get even more neighborhood kids coming to the center.”

VATICAN CITY

Vatican law criminalizes abuse of adults by priests, laity

By NICOLE WINFIELD
Associated Press

Pope Francis has changed Catholic Church law to explicitly criminalize the sexual abuse of adults by priests who abuse their authority and to say that laypeople who hold church office also can be sanctioned for similar sex crimes.

The new provisions, released Tuesday after 14 years of study, were contained in the revised criminal law section of the Vatican’s Code of

Canon Law, the in-house legal system that covers the 1.3 billion-member Catholic Church and operates independently from civil laws.

The most significant changes are contained in two articles, 1395 and 1398, which aim to address shortcomings in the church’s handling of sexual abuse. The law recognizes that adults, not only children, can be victimized by priests who abuse their authority. The revisions also say

that laypeople holding church positions, such as school principals or parish economists, can be punished for abusing minors as well as adults.

The Vatican also criminalized priests “grooming” minors or vulnerable adults to compel them to engage in pornography. The update represents the first time church law has officially recognized as a criminal act the method used by sexual predators to build relationships with

victims they have targeted for sexual exploitation.

The new law, which is set to take effect on Dec. 8, also removes much of the discretion that long allowed bishops and religious superiors to ignore or cover up abuse, making clear those in positions of authority will be held responsible if they fail to properly investigate or sanction predator priests.

A bishop can be removed from office for “culpable negligence” or if he does

not report sex crimes to church authorities, although the canon law foresees no punishment for failing to report suspected crimes to police.

Ever since the 1983 code first was issued, lawyers and bishops have complained it was inadequate for dealing with the sexual abuse of minors since it required time-consuming trials. Victims and their advocates, meanwhile, argued the code

left too much discretion in the hands of bishops who had an interest in covering up for their priests.

The Vatican issued piecemeal changes over the years to address problems and loopholes, most significantly requiring all cases to be sent to the Holy See for review and allowing for a more streamlined administrative process to defrock a priest if the evidence against him was overwhelming.

AMHERST

Ruling gives hope for potential deportee

A Guatemalan man who lived in an Amherst church for more than three years to avoid deportation said Tuesday he’s hopeful a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision boosts his efforts to remain in the country.

Lucio Perez’s lawyer, Glenn Formica, also said in a virtual news conference with his client that the April decision in Niz-Chavez vs. Garland also potentially affects the cases of millions more immigrants living in the country illegally.

The high court ruled in the Niz-Chavez case that federal policy has long deprived immigrants facing deportation of proper notification.

BOSTON

Candidate files for state auditor

One week after state Auditor Suzanne Bump announced she would not seek another term, transportation advocate Chris Dempsey filed campaign finance paperwork in the race to succeed her.

Dempsey submitted a statement of organization with the state Office of Campaign and Political Finance on Friday, a major preliminary step toward launching a bid for the only state constitutional office currently poised for an opening in 2022. The office posted the paperwork Tuesday morning.

Dempsey, a Brookline resident who leads the Transportation for Massachusetts advocacy coalition and was a central figure in the opposition effort to Boston’s 2024 Olympics bid, declined to comment when reached by the News Service on Tuesday.

HOLYOKE

Heroin dealer sent to prison

A Holyoke man was sentenced to 7½ years in federal prison after pleading guilty to charges that he distributed large amounts of heroin in that city prior to his arrest three years ago.

Jose Rodriguez, 34, was ordered by Judge Mark Mastroianni to serve 90 months, to be followed by 4 years of probation.

Rodriguez in October pleaded guilty to charges of distributing heroin and possessing heroin with intent to distribute.

He was arrested in July 2019 as part of an investigation into heroin trafficking in Holyoke. Prosecutors charged him with possessing more than 100 grams of heroin with plans to distribute it. He was also charged with selling heroin on two occasions in Holyoke in 2018.

His arrest was the result of an investigation by Holyoke and state police and the FBI.

SPRINGFIELD

Sprinklers help knock down fire

A fire Mason Square Apartments Tuesday morning caused minor damage but was prevented from spreading through the former Indian Motorcycle plant by overhead sprinklers, a fire official said.

Capt. Drew Piemonte said no one was injured, and no one was displaced in the fire at 837 State St. It was reported around 10:45 a.m.

When firefighters arrived, the fire had been contained by the overhead fire sprinklers, he said.

“Sprinklers knocked it down,” he said. “The sprinklers did what they were supposed to.”

The fire damage was confined to the single apartment.

SPRINGFIELD

Trustees extend charter school contract

Oversight of school director still at issue

By ELIZABETH ROMÁN
eroman@repub.com

The Sabis International Charter School board of trustees voted Tuesday night to extend its contract with Springfield Education Management LLC for 30 days. The previous contract expired on May 31.

The board also approved a \$26 million fiscal 2022 budget.

Atu White, trustees chairman, said attorneys for the board as well as Springfield Education Management agreed to extend the current contract to allow time to resolve a dispute around the wording of the new contract.

“A couple of people from the contract committee wanted SEM to submit updated language, which they did. Our attorney had a couple of follow up questions as to their language and I believe it was answered, so I will forward that to you all,”



The Sabis International Charter School board of trustees voted Tuesday night to extend its contract with Springfield Education Management LLC for 30 days.

he said to the board during the online meeting.

Of the 12-member board, 11 members were present and all voted in favor of extending the contract. Negotiations have been ongoing since February 2020. White said the contract subcommittee will be discussing the updated language submitted by the management company at a June 8 meeting.

“Once our attorney has had an opportunity to review the language and give us his opinion in writing, the contract committee will discuss it in our meeting,” White said. “This gives you a couple of days to see what the update language is and where we are headed from there.”

The contract disagreement centers on who has authority over the school director. Under the current contract, the director reports to the Sabis Network, which provides the curriculum for the Springfield school and others around the world. Some trustees have argued the director should report instead to the board of trustees. Springfield Education Management, the local representative of the Sabis Network, believes Sabis should retain that control.

“SEM remains optimistic and feels it has made great concessions in an effort to try to resolve this impasse,” said Raipher Pellegrino, lawyer for Springfield Education Management.

If an agreement cannot be reached on the wording of the new contract, another option would be for the trustees to purchase a licensing agreement from Sabis, which would allow it to retain the name and the curriculum while exerting

control over the director.

White said Springfield Education Management provided some information regarding the option to license, but did not go into details about it during the meeting. The fiscal 2022 budget the board approved Tuesday includes \$515,000 for the purchase of books used in Sabis’ curriculum.

Wilfredo Lopez Jr., treasurer for the board, presented highlights of the budget along with Steven Bissonnette, business manager for the school.

The approved budget includes merit raises for teachers averaging 4% and \$228,000 for building projects and equipment. It includes a \$2.3 million surplus from the 2021 budget.

Bissonnette said the school is anticipating several million dollars in COVID-19 relief funding, including \$2.6 million to be used in the next two years and an additional \$5.8 million to be used in the next three years.



Survivors Viola Fletcher, middle, and Hughes Van Ellis, middle right, listen to President Joe Biden as he speaks on the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa race massacre at the Greenwood Cultural Center in Tulsa, Okla., yesterday. (MANDEL NGAN / AFP)

TULSA, OKLA.

Biden marks 1921 race massacre in emotional, graphic speech

By JONATHAN LEMIRE AND DARLENE SUPERVILLE
Associated Press

An emotional President Joe Biden marked the 100th anniversary of the massacre that destroyed a thriving Black community in Tulsa, declaring Tuesday that he had “come to fill the silence” about one of the nation’s darkest — and long suppressed — moments of racial violence.

“Some injustices are so heinous, so horrific, so grievous, they cannot be buried, no matter how hard people try,” Biden said. “Only with truth can come healing.”

Biden’s commemoration of the deaths of hundreds of Black people killed by a white mob a century ago came amid the current national reckoning on racial justice.

“Just because history is silent, it does not mean that it did not take place,” Biden said. He said that “hell was unleashed,” literal hell was unleashed.” And now, he said, the nation must come to grips with the following sin of denial.

“We can’t just choose what we want to know, and not what we should know,” said Biden. “I come here to help fill the silence, because in silence wounds deepen.”

After Biden left, there was a spontaneous singing by some audience members of a famous civil rights march song, “Ain’t Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around.”

The events on Tuesday stood in stark contrast to then-President Donald Trump’s trip to Tulsa last June, which was greeted by protests. Or the former president’s decision, one year ago, to clear Lafayette Square near the White House

of demonstrators who gathered to protest the death of George Floyd, a Black man, under the knee of a white Minneapolis police officer.

In 1921 — on May 31 and June 1 — a white mob, including some people hastily deputized by authorities, looted and burned Tulsa’s Greenwood district, which was referred to as Black Wall Street.

On Tuesday, the president, joined by top Black advisers, met privately with three surviving members of the Greenwood community who lived through the violence, the White House said. Viola “Mother” Fletcher, Hughes “Uncle Red” Van Ellis and Lessie “Mother Randle” Benningfield Randle are all between the ages of 101 and 107.

Biden said their experience had been “a story seen in the mirror dimly.”

“But no longer,” the president told the survivors. “Now your story will be known in full view.”

Outside, Latasha Sanders, 33, of Tulsa, brought her five children and a nephew in hopes of spotting Biden.

“It’s been 100 years, and this is the first we’ve heard from any U.S. president,” she said. “I brought my kids here today just so they could be a part of history and not just hear about it, and so they can teach generations to come.”

John Ondiek, another Tulsan in the crowd following Biden’s speech on cellphones, said he was encouraged that “There aren’t just Black people here. That tells me there’s an awakening going on in this country.”

As many as 300 Black Tulsans were killed, and thousands of survivors were

forced for a time into internment camps overseen by the National Guard. Burned bricks and a fragment of a church basement are about all that survive today of the more than 30-block historically Black district.

Several hundred people milled around Greenwood Avenue in front of the historic Vernon African Methodist Episcopal Church awaiting Biden’s arrival at the nearby Greenwood Cultural Center. Some vendors were selling memorabilia, including Black Lives Matter hats, shirts and flags under a bridge of the interstate that cuts through the district.

The names and pictures of Black men killed by police hung on a chain-link fence next to the church, including Eric Harris and Terrence Crutcher in Tulsa.

Biden briefly toured an exhibit at the center, at times stepping closer to peer at framed historic photographs, before he was escorted into a private meeting with the three survivors.

America’s continuing struggle over race will continue to test Biden, whose presidency would have been impossible without overwhelming support from Black voters, both in the Democratic primaries and the general election.

He announced Tuesday that he was appointing Vice President Kamala Harris to lead efforts on voting rights as the GOP carries out efforts to pass laws restricting access to the ballot. Republicans portray such legislation as aimed at preventing fraudulent voting, but many critics believe it is designed to limit the voting of minorities.

BEIJING

China reports 1st human case of H10N3 bird flu

By ADAM TAYLOR
The Washington Post

The Chinese government announced Tuesday that a man in Jiangsu province, northwest of Shanghai, had become the first person known to have been infected with the H10N3 strain of bird flu.

In a statement, China’s National Health Commission emphasized that there was no evidence that the strain had the ability to spread among humans, adding that the risk of a significant outbreak was “very low.”

The patient, a 41-year-old man who lived in the city of Zhenjiang, was hospitalized on April 28 after having fever symptoms, the National Health Commission said. He was diagnosed with H10N3 a month later.

Though the man remains under medical supervision, his condition was described as stable and meeting the standards for discharge. It was not clear from the statement how he caught the virus.

The news of the H10N3 infection comes amid the devastation of the covid-19 pandemic, which also was first identified in China and is widely thought to have come to humans from bats through some form of zoonotic spread.

A different strain of bird flu, known as H7N9, led to the deaths of around 300 people during an outbreak

between 2016 and 2017.

But varieties of avian influenza are common in China and, due to increased surveillance of them, relatively easy to find in humans. Unlike H7N9, there is no evidence that H10N3 can spread easily from human to human.

“The more we look for novel viruses as a cause of illness among patients the more we are likely to find them,” Gregory Gray, an infectious-disease epidemiologist at Duke University, told the South China Morning Post.

Alexandra Phelan, a global health lawyer at Georgetown University’s Center for Global Health Science and Security, wrote on Twitter that people should be “alert but not alarmed” about the news, adding that spillover between species did not itself mean there was epidemic risk.

China’s National Health Commission also said that the H10N3 was low pathogenic among poultry, meaning it caused less severe illness among birds.

Chinese authorities had placed all the man’s close contacts under investigation but did not display symptoms.

Local residents were told to remain vigilant, wearing a mask and visiting a doctor if they suffered any influenza symptoms. They were also advised to try to close contact with birds, dead or alive.

KYIV, UKRAINE

Activist stabs himself with pen while in court

A Belarusian activist stabbed himself in the neck during a court hearing Tuesday in Minsk to protest political repression and authorities’ threats to prosecute his relatives.

Stsiapan Latypau used a pen to inflict the wound while he was sitting in court in a defendant’s cage, according to the Viasna human rights center in Belarus. Videos posted online showed Latypau being carried out of the building in Belarus’ capital and put into an ambulance.

He was hospitalized and put into an induced coma, Viasna said. His lawyer, Olga Batyuk, wouldn’t comment

on Latypau’s condition.

Before stabbing himself, Latypau told his father during the court proceedings that investigators had threatened to open criminal cases against his relatives and associates if he failed to admit his guilt.

Latypau faces charges of staging actions violating public order, resisting police and other alleged actions that carry a prison sentence of up to 10 years.

He had been in jail since September, when he was arrested during massive protests against Belarus’ authoritarian leader, President Alexander Lukashenko.

— Associated Press

Sports

B | The Republican. | WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2, 2021



GARRY BROWN

Hitting to all fields

JUST SITTING AND wondering what’s wrong with Eddie Rodriguez. **Now the Bruins need to win one on the road.**

Revolution 1, Cincinnati 0. Another Matt Turner shutout. **Jaylen Brown’s injury really hurt the Celtics.**

News item: John Forslund calls Bruins-Islanders playoff game for NBC. A Springfield native and former Indians broadcaster.

It’s a year for the ages, starring Phil Mickelson and Helio Castroneves.

Aces 117, Fever 77. Mis-match, WNBA style.

Isn’t it a bit early for a Patriots QB controversy?

Avalanche 7, Vegas 1. A goal and three assists for Cale Makar.

Ye Olde Handicapper’s horse, Shaftesbury, got scratched.

Pawtucket’s plight - no more PawSox.

The Basketball Hall of Fame has come a long way from its first home on Alden Street.

Number of the week: 269 (New record for NASCAR Cup Series victories, set by Hendrick Motorsports).

On the PGA Tour, another near-miss for Jordan Spieth.

Beware of the Rays, the sports world’s hottest team.

Yes, Valley Wheel adult baseball is back.

So far, Alex Verdugo is having a better year than Mookie Betts.

You’re getting old if you saw Alec Vyce go 14-0 for Chicopee.

Oh, those Maple Leafs, hexed again at playoff time.

Stunning stats: In 1884, Charles “Old Hoss” Radbourne went 60-12 and pitched 678 innings.

He’s back: Nonito Donaire, a bantamweight champ at age 38.

Where’s Isan Diaz? Active again for the Miami Marlins.

Good idea: The Pro Bowlers Tour adding a junior division.

Cookie the Shih Tzu is a handsome dude in his new harness.

News item: Boston College beats Syracuse 16-10 for first NCAA women’s lacrosse title. Outscoring foes 88-47 in tourney play.

Grandpa misses bowling at Mike DiCarlo’s Middtown.

Best cop show ever? I’ll take “Kojak.”

Honk if you saw Wayne Gretzky play at the Civic Center.

Who is Sydney Harrison? Minnechaug lacrosse stand-out.

Eggad - 53 years since Cass Elliott did “Dream a Little Dream of Me.”

Let’s hear it for the Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp.

Add Tyler Thoffoli (Montreal Canadiens) to my list of favorite sports names.

There’ll never be another Firpo Marberry.

Garry Brown can be reached at geebrown1918@gmail.com

CELTICS: Legends irked by Irving’s stomp on Boston logo, [B2](#)

TENNIS: Nadal wins in straight sets; Venus Williams ousted, [B2](#)

WORLD HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIPS: Americans win IIHF group, [B2](#)

BRUINS PLAYOFFS

Rask dealing with ‘nagging’ injuries

Bruins have 2 days off before Game 3 tomorrow

MATT VAUTOUR
mvautour@masslive.com

Bruce Cassidy acknowledged that Tuukka Rask isn’t at 100 percent, which isn’t uncommon for hockey players in the postseason. He doesn’t expect it to affect his goalie’s ability to play as the Bruins and Islanders move their tied best-of-seven playoff series to Long Island for Game 3 tomorrow night.

“He’s been dealing with some injuries all year. He’s obviously good enough to play. They’re nagging. Not unique to just Tuukka,” Cassidy said. “I’ll have a better update on if there’s going to be an issue down the road, but right now he’ll go in and get his treatment and be ready to go tomorrow unless I hear differently. Right now I don’t believe there’s any reason to think he won’t be able to go Thursday.”

In Monday’s 4-3 overtime loss, Rask allowed four goals, the most he’s given up in the postseason this year, but Cassidy pointed to factors beyond his goalie’s health.

“They did a better job getting to the front of the net and crashing the top of his crease. The second goal was a

good example of that. That’s playoff hockey. That’s on us. We need to do a better job boxing out to let him see those pucks and freeze those pucks. But that’s something goalies deal with as you get farther along in the season,” said Cassidy, who circled back to Rask’s health. “As far as his injury goes, I don’t believe they’ll be anything to worry about, but if there is, obviously we’ll have to sort through that.”

Rask acknowledged himself that he’s battling through aches and pains last week.

“Game feels good. Health is O.K.,” the 34-year-old goalie said on WEEI’s Greg Hill Show, Friday morning. “I’ve been playing. It’s not as good as I want it to be, but I’m out there. That’s all that matters.”

Rask has a 2.06 GAA and a .930 save percentage in seven playoff games, are both are better than his overall (2.27/.921) and postseason (2.19/.926) career marks.

Rask, who has been largely durable throughout his career was out with an undisclosed injury from March 7 to March 25.

He returned for one period, coincidentally against the Islanders that day, but left with discomfort after not giving up a goal. He didn’t play again until April 15.



Boston Bruins goaltender Tuukka Rask makes a save against New York Islanders’ Leo Komarov in the first period of Game 2 on Monday in Boston. (WINSLOW TOWNSON / ASSOCIATED PRESS)



Central starting pitcher Fabian Barnett follows through after delivering a pitch against Chicopee High School yesterday at Central High School. Photo gallery at [masslive.com/highschoolsports](https://www.masslive.com/highschoolsports). (GAGE NUTTER / MASSLIVE)

HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL | CENTRAL 11, CHICOPEE 1 (6 INNINGS)

Eagles capitalize on early miscues

GAGE NUTTER
gnutter@masslive.com

SPRINGFIELD — The first time Central and Chicopee played each other this season on May 13, the Golden Eagles committed a handful of errors that doomed their chances of winning.

Yesterday it was the Pacers that made mistakes in the field. Central took advantage of those miscues and blew past Chicopee, 11-1, on its way to a mercy rule win in six innings.

Rich Escobar went 2-for-2 with a run scored and three runs batted in for the Golden Eagles. Joshua Wood went 1-for-3 with two runs batted in and a run scored. Darrian DeJesus, Nathan Serrano and Josh Frometa had the only hits for Chicopee. Escobar also pitched an inning in relief and struck out two batters.

The Golden Eagles led Chicopee by four runs late during its first matchup this season, but fielding mistakes let Chicopee back into the game.

Central came into yesterday’s game with a new level of focus and dedication toward finishing the game strong.

“That fueled the fire tonight,” said Central coach Scott Arel about the Golden Eagles’ first game against Chicopee. “They wanted it. They know nothing is ever secure. Even with a nine-run lead you have to finish and we did that today.”

The Pacers grabbed the lead in the top of the second inning when Serrano

hit a single to right field and brought Kevyn McCarthy home. Central starting pitcher Fabian Barnett walked the bases loaded to start the inning, but the Golden Eagles minimized the damage and only let one run cross.

Central grabbed the lead in the bottom of the third inning and didn’t give it back. Andy Rosario hit a line drive down the third base line that bounced off a Pacer player’s glove and into the outfield, bringing a run in to tie the game. Two batters later, Isaiah Ramos hit a pop up into the middle of the infield. Miscommunication between the Pacers’ fielders led to a dropped ball and a run coming across, giving Central the lead.

Pouncing on Chicopee’s mistakes was key to Central’s success.

“If you don’t grasp that momentum your team can deflate energy-wise,” Arel said. “If you don’t it can switch back to them. It’s huge.”

Escobar hit a three-run triple during the following at-bat to clear the bases and put Central ahead, 5-1.

Following Escobar’s two strikeouts in the top of the fifth inning, Central brought in five more runs during the bottom of the inning. Freshman Julio Solier brought in two runs with a two-run double to right field. Wood brought in two more runs with a triple to right field during the following at bat. Jesus Alicea brought in another run to make it 10-1 with a sacrifice ground out.

Solier’s two-run double was his only at bat of the day as a pinch hitter.

“I didn’t start, but I’m a team player.” Solier said “This game, I just wanted to help my team win.”

Ramos brought in another run in the bottom of the sixth inning with a single to earn the mercy-rule win.

Chicopee’s mishaps in the field and on the base-paths made it difficult for the team to get into a rhythm and string at bats together.

“Good teams like (Central) will take advantage of those mistakes,” said Chicopee coach Dan Asselin. “I don’t think they are 10 runs better than us, but they compounded on our mistakes and took advantage. That is a good team over there. You can’t give them extra outs.”

Arel is in his first year at the helm of the Golden Eagles’ varsity program following a decade at the junior varsity level. He thinks the team has had its share of mental mistakes, but physically the team came ready to go from Day 1 this season.

“They were training all winter in the cage, throwing and doing team workouts,” Arel said. “There are nine seniors on the team. They are veterans and know how to be prepared for a season. ... When the first game came along we were hitting our stride. We had some ups and downs, which every team will have. It’s just how we respond that will determine the type of team we are.”

HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL

Big 2nd inning paces Chicopee

BY JASON KATES
jkates@masslive.com

NORTHAMPTON — A 10-run second inning for the Chicopee softball team guided the Pacers to their eighth straight victory this season as they defeated Northampton 17-1 yesterday in five innings.

Senior Ashley Hebert paced the Chicopee offensive outburst, reaching base in all five plate appearances with four singles, a double, two runs scored and four runs batted in.

“It was an awesome game, I’m so proud of everyone on the team,” said Hebert, who was one of four Pacers to record multiple hits. “I’m proud of my performance, I’m proud of everyone’s performance, I think they did a fantastic job.”

After a scoreless first inning, the Chicopee bats came to life in the top half of the second, as it sent 11 consecutive batters to the plate and put up 10 runs before the Blue Devils could secure an out. The Pacers’ big inning was highlighted by a two-run triple for senior Aneesa Rivera and a bases-clearing double for junior Jordyn Padilla.

Chicopee head coach Mel Sasser said he was pleased with the team’s aggressiveness at the plate, allowing them to build an insurmountable lead.

“I liked the way the girls swung, we made a lot of contact, we hit the ball hard and we were able to generate some runs early and get up early and keep it that way,” Sasser said.

All nine Pacers starters reached base, as both Sasser and Hebert praised the depth that was put on display by the team at the plate. The 17 runs scored was their highest offensive output of the season.

“It’s nice that one through nine, our order is long,” Sasser

WASHINGTON

Court will not take up challenge of \$2.1 billion cancer case award

BY ROBERT BARNES
Washington Post

The Supreme Court ruled in low-profile cases Tuesday, but it was the justices’ decision to bypass an appeal that might have the most lasting impact. The court turned down a request from Johnson & Johnson to review a \$2.1 billion award to women who claimed the company’s talc-based baby powder contained cancer-causing asbestos. The company told the Supreme Court that a link to ovarian cancer from its product had not been proved. And it said a trial in St. Louis in which 22 plaintiffs from 12 states were allowed to press claims was so unfair that it violated the company’s right to due process. As is its custom, the court did not provide a reason for turning down the case. Justices Samuel Alito Jr. and Brett Kavanaugh recused themselves from considering it. The company faces thousands of lawsuits regarding the talc-based powder, and last year it said it would stop selling the product in the United States and Canada. The company continues to sell a cornstarch version. The case at issue came from a 2018 trial in which a jury awarded about \$4.7 billion to the nearly two dozen women and their estates, plus billions of dollars more in punitive damages. A state appeals court later reduced the total verdict to \$2.1 billion and dismissed two of the plaintiffs from the case. In a statement, the company said the Supreme Court’s refusal to consider the appeal was not a ruling on the merits, and leaves significant legal questions that state and federal courts “will continue to face.”

Justices typically do not give reasons for recusal. Alito’s financial disclosures show he owns stock in the company. Kavanaugh’s father was a lobbyist for the cosmetics industry, which had argued against warning labels for talc-based products. The case is Johnson & Johnson v. Ingham. In other action at the court, the justices continued to dispose of easy-to-decide cases as they entered what should be their final month of decisions. In one, the justices were unanimous in ruling that tribal police officers can stop and detain non-Indians for potential violations of state or federal law that occur on reservation lands. The court overturned a decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit that sided with a motorist charged with gun- and drug-related crimes after he was stopped by a tribal officer on a road that crosses the Crow reservation in Montana. Officer James Saylor of the Crow Tribe Police Department found Joshua Cooley in his truck parked by the side of the road in 2016, headlights on and motor running. Cooley observed guns and drugs in the truck, and detained Cooley while seeking help from county and federal officers. In siding with Cooley, the 9th Circuit cited previous Supreme Court precedents that limit the authority tribal officers have over non-Indians. But Justice Stephen Breyer said that missed an important exception recognized in previous cases. It gives tribal police the authority to exercise civil authority over the conduct of non-Indians on reservations “when that conduct threatens or has some direct effect

on the political integrity, the economic security, or the health or welfare of the tribe.” Breyer wrote that description fits Cooley’s case “almost like a glove.” “To deny a tribal police officer authority to search and detain for a reasonable time any person he or she believes may commit or has committed a crime would make it difficult for tribes to protect themselves against ongoing threats,” he wrote. The case is United States v. Cooley. The court is working toward a goal of issuing decisions in cases argued this term by June 28. There are about two dozen remaining, and the justices will release more opinions Thursday.

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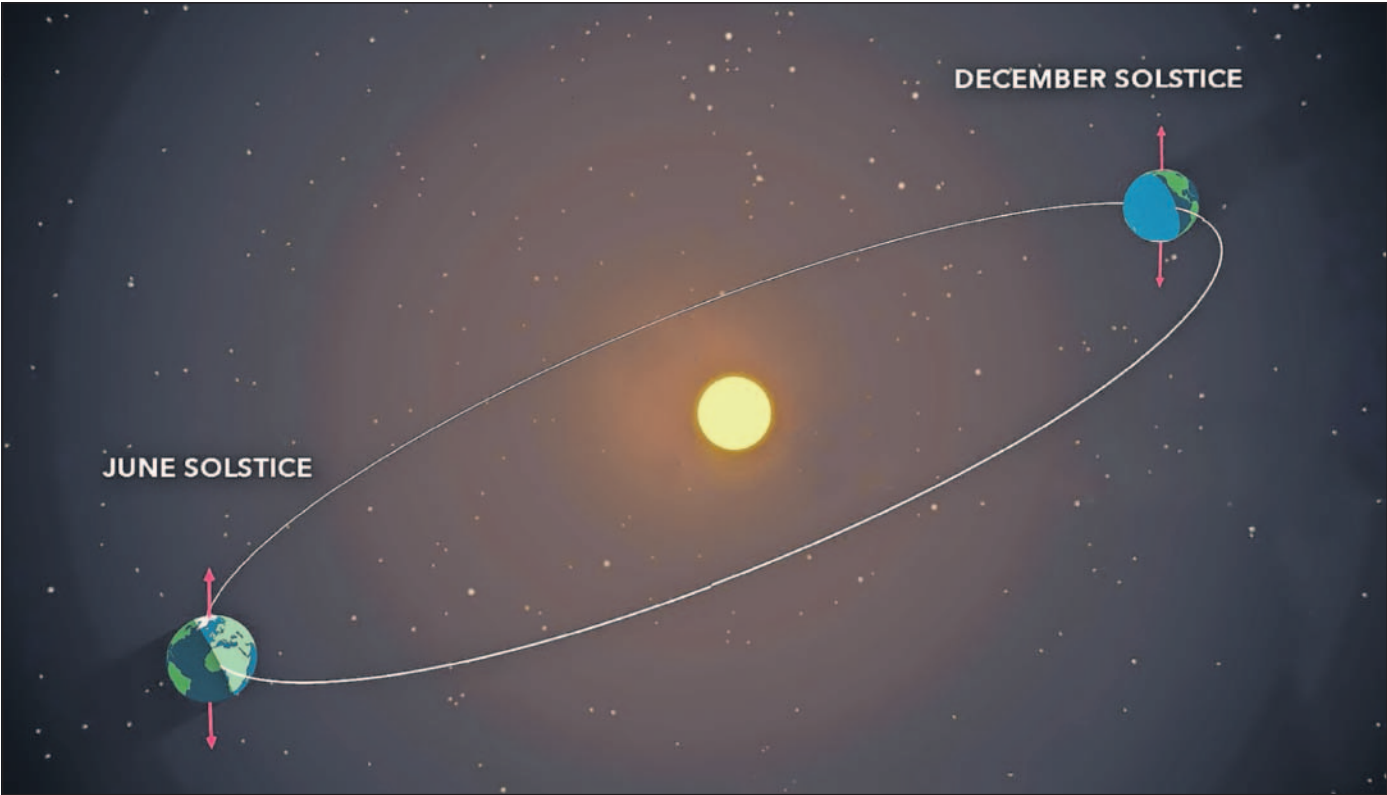


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Health & Science

C | [The Republican.](#) | WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2, 2021

TRUTH IS, THE ARRIVAL OF OUR **LONGEST DAY** COMES WITH THE PROMISE THAT IT’S ALL DOWNHILL FROM HERE. THE **SUMMER SOLSTICE** IS A PACKAGE DEAL WITH THE INEXORABLE SLIDE TOWARD WINTER.



The summer solstice happens June 20 at 11:31 p.m. The next day, June 21, is our first full day of summer.

Longer days upon us as summer solstice nears

I’d say “here comes the sun,” but we’re pretty much already at “high noon” for the year.

The sun is climbing to within a couple of degrees of its highest, and rising and setting near its northern limits, so few of us will notice much change in length of day or strength of sunlight between now and the summer solstice, and the start of astronomical summer.

This time always seems to sneak up just as I’m getting used to the idea of late evenings, and that would be fine if I didn’t suddenly feel the need to squeeze in as much of this extended daylight as I can before it’s gone. That will happen before we know it, and before I’m ready.

Truth is, the arrival of our longest day comes with the promise that it’s all downhill from here. The summer solstice is a package deal with the inexorable slide toward winter. And it can’t wait to remind us. One sign — our earliest sunrise at around June 14 — actually precedes the solstice. Right after that, less than two weeks from now, sunrises begin eating into our days.

The scales finally tip a week later as the sun reaches its northernmost point in our sky and we get the longest day. This year, the summer solstice — when the sun halts its northward march and starts falling south — comes on June 20 at 11:31 p.m. On June 21, our first full day of summer, the sun will already be past its peak. In other words, the moment summer begins, we start our descent into winter.

Provided we don’t quibble over the second or two difference between them, we get three equally long days in a row. In Springfield, June 19, 20, and 21 each lasts 15 hours and 15 minutes. Surrounding days differ by only a few seconds more.

The shortest night — a mere 8



PATRICK ROWAN
SKYWATCH

hours 45 minutes — falls on the solstice. If we subtract morning and evening twilight, we get just under 8 hours of darkness. Travel north of Springfield, and the nights shorten more. In Derby, Vermont, near the Canadian border, a solstice night is 22 minutes shorter. This trend continues to the Arctic Circle where the solstice sun doesn’t set at all.

For those of us with an evening bias, the illusion of lengthening days extends a week past the solstice, to our latest sunset, but after that, the days shorten at both ends with increasing dispatch. On the bright side, there are still a couple of months left to meteorological summer, which covers our three warmest months: June, July, and August.

Counter-intuitively, even though the days are shortening, the warmest part of the year lags behind the solstice, just as the warmest part of days usually come during the afternoon when the sun has already crested and is descending.

These are days I welcome, although they do tend to sap too much energy. Fortunately, the cooler nights offer some reprieve ... crickets chirping through open windows, being able to step out into the dark on a whim with shorts and bare feet. But for the occasional mosquito, I have no complaints.

In addition to spectacular views into our Milky Way galaxy, there is one potential nighttime attraction I would love to catch this summer - the aurora borealis, or northern lights. These have pretty much been absent from our southern New England skies for the past decade, but the sun appears to be waking from the quiet period of its 11½-year cycle. New eruptions of sunspots and flares increase the chances that solar particle streams will intersect with Earth’s magnetic field and

trigger geomagnetic storms and auroras. I hope a few are visible from here. Sign up at spaceweather.com for free aurora email alerts.

It is easy to overlook the fact that, while the sun — our star — is everything to us, we are mere denizens on an insignificant fragment leftover from its formation 4.6 billion years ago. To get a sense of how small we are, one needn’t resort to the incomprehensible scale of the universe; all you need is the sun. Compared to just this thing we see and feel every day, we are next-to-nothing.

The sun is 865 million miles wide (109 times Earth’s diameter) and big enough to hold a million Earths. It contains 99.85% of all matter in our solar system, and most of the rest belongs to Jupiter. Only about three millionths belongs to Earth.

I have in the past suggested a romantic image of the sun as our campfire in the eternal night of deep space, but the scale is way off. Its mind-boggling mass squeezes the inner core to 250 billion times the pressure of Earth’s air at sea level, and raises the temperature to 27 million degrees Fahrenheit. There, in the rampaging atomic chaos, 700 million tons of hydrogen are fused into 695 million tons of helium every second. This is the same fusion energy lighting all the stars you see in the sky at night.

According to Einstein’s famous equation ($E = mc^2$), the remaining 5 million tons of matter is annihilated, releasing incredible volumes of energy that take another million years to work its way from the sun’s core to the surface. On the way, it spreads and cools, yet still manages to heat the entire 2,347 billion square miles of the sun’s surface to 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit when it gets there.

Most then breaks free of the surface as light, dispersing to flood our entire solar system. It’s curious how after its million-year struggle to escape, it dashes to Earth in only eight minutes. (We are currently 94 million miles away from the sun — about 3 million miles farther than in winter.)

From here, despite appearing just the size of a pea held at arm’s length, the solar disk is bright enough to blind us and burn our skin. And why

“The sun is 865 million miles wide (109 times Earth’s diameter) and big enough to hold a million Earths. It contains 99.85% of all matter in our solar system, and most of the rest belongs to Jupiter. Only about three millionths belongs to Earth.”

Columnist Patrick Rowan

shouldn’t it — it doesn’t need us. Without the magnetic shielding of Earth’s Van Allen Belts, and our substantial atmosphere to filter out harmful radiation, we would be vanquished.

At Mars, the sun shines less than half as brightly, but because there is no protective magnetic bubble and scant atmosphere, the ground is essentially laid bare to the “elements” and many scientists think the barren Martian sands could be sterilized down to a dozen feet or more. I hope we’ll find out more about this soon.

The truth is, our little planet is an island of stability in surprisingly rough seas — something to remember the next time you don sunglasses and apply sun block to protect against the sun’s damaging rays.

Our modern perspective makes it almost seem comical — although quite understandable — how only a few centuries ago, people imagined that the sun circled the Earth, and not the other way around. Given this, one has to wonder which of the views we hold now will look equally silly to those looking back in a few hundred years.

Find rise and set times for the sun and moon, and follow ever-changing celestial highlights in the Skywatch section of the Weather Almanac in The Republican and Sunday Republican.

Patrick Rowan has written Skywatch for The Republican since 1987 and has been a Weather Almanac contributor since the mid 1990s.



This 2001 photo shows a shortfin mako shark off the coast of Massachusetts. The Atlantic Shark Institute in South Kingstown is studying great white, shortfin mako, thresher, porbeagle and blue sharks. (GREG SKOMAL VIA AP)

SOUTH KINGSTOWN, RI

Atlantic Shark Institute to study 5 shark species

The arrival of summer in Rhode Island also means the arrival of sharks.

Jon Dodd, executive director of the Atlantic Shark Institute in South Kingstown, hopes to learn more about five species of shark by catching and tagging several, dropping video cameras into the water to observe them in their natu-

“We can’t continue to take over 100 million sharks out of the ocean, every year, and not create long-term issues to the health and well-being of our planet.”

The institute is studying great white, shortfin mako, thresher, porbeagle and blue sharks.

The goal is to tag five juvenile great whites, 10 female blue sharks, 10 porbeagle sharks and 20 makos.

The smaller, younger

“These sharks are critical to the health of our oceans in a wide variety of ways, and that makes this research all the more important. We can’t continue to take over 100 million sharks out of the ocean, every year, and not create long-term issues to the health and well-being of our planet.”

Jon Dodd, executive director, Atlantic Shark Institute

ral habitat, and monitoring acoustic equipment to get a better idea of their travel patterns.

“These sharks are critical to the health of our oceans in a wide variety of ways, and that makes this research all the more important,” he told The Providence Journal.

sharks are more likely to be found in Rhode Island waters, where they can feed on striped bass and dogfish, Dodd said. The bigger, older white sharks are more likely to be drawn to the waters off Cape Cod where they can feed on seals, he said.

– Associated Press

MEDICAL NOTES

AGAWAM

NAMI groups

The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Western Massachusetts (NAMI-WM) offers NAMI Connection Recovery support groups in a virtual format. A diagnosis is not required to attend any group. Anyone with mental health condition is welcome to attend any group without prior registration. For more information, contact the office at 413-786-9139 or go online to namiwm.org/support.

Narcotics

Anonymous

To find a local Narcotics Anonymous support group, visit NERNA.ORG or WesternMassNA.org or call 866-624-3578.

EAST LONGMEADOW

Survivors of Suicide Loss

Survivors of Suicide Loss, a support group for adults who have lost a loved one to suicide, meets on the third Monday of each month at the Forastiere Smith Funeral Home, 220 North Main St., from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

This is a peer-facilitated group. The meetings are

open, meaning new members are always welcome. The meeting room is set up to allow for recommended social distancing and attendees are required to bring and wear their own mask while in the meeting room. If circumstances allow, some meetings may be held outdoors.

HOLYOKE

COVID-19 testing

Free “Stop the Spread” COVID-19 testing at Holyoke Community College has been extended through September, according to the Holyoke Board of Health.

Drive-thru testing is conducted six days a week in Parking Lot M by the Bartley Center for Athletics & Recreation on the Homestead Avenue campus. There are signs and parking attendants on site to help guide traffic. The testing site is open Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 7 to 11 a.m. and Tuesday and Thursday from 2 to 7 p.m.

Testing is free to all Massachusetts residents and conducted on a first-come, first-served basis. There are no appointments and no referral is necessary. Turn-around time for results is typically four days or fewer.

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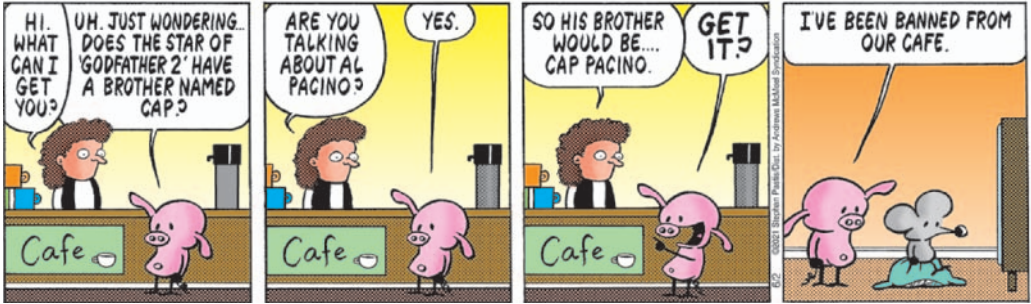
LOCKHORNS ByBUNNY HOEST & JOHN REINER



ZITS By JERRY SCOTT & JIM BORGMAN



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE By STEPHAN PASTIS



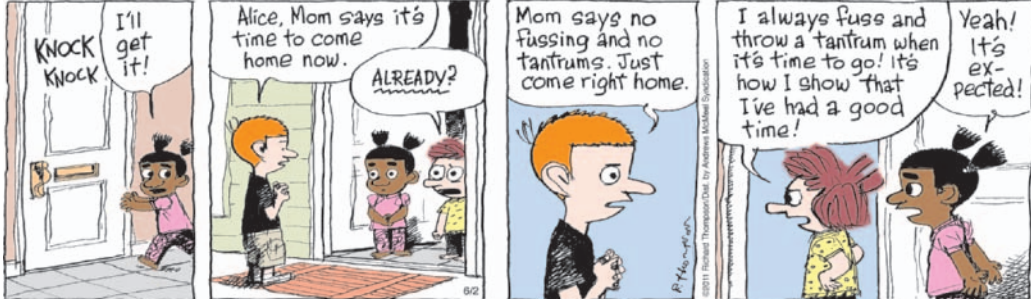
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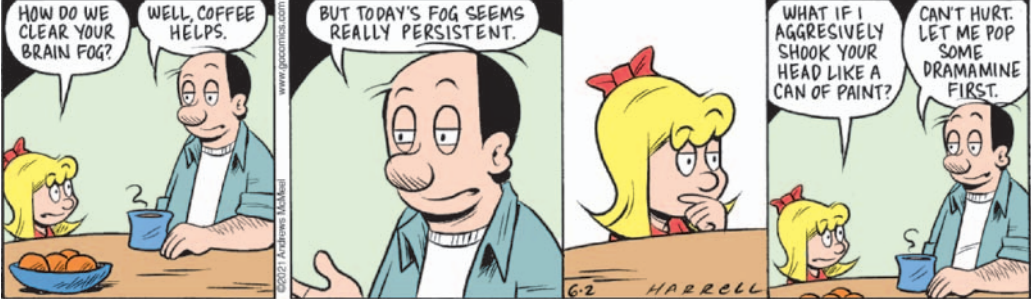
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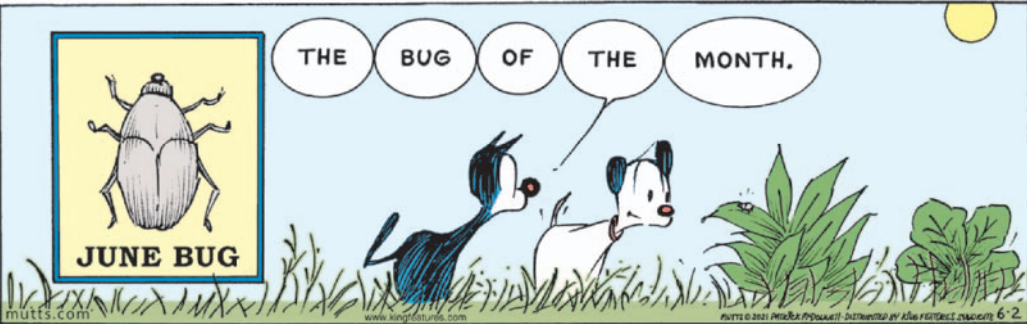
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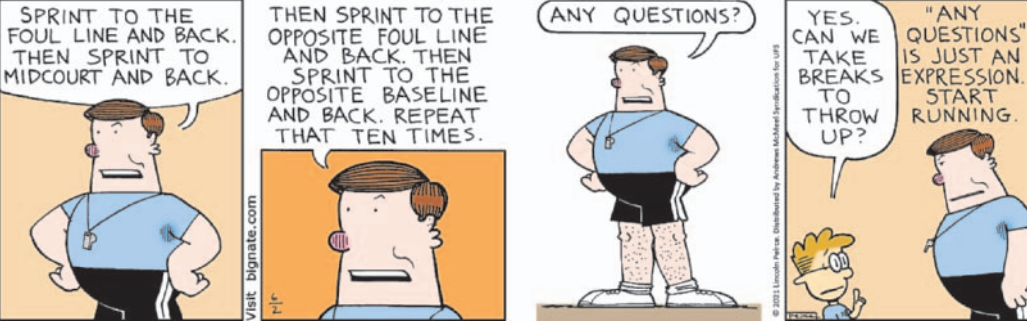
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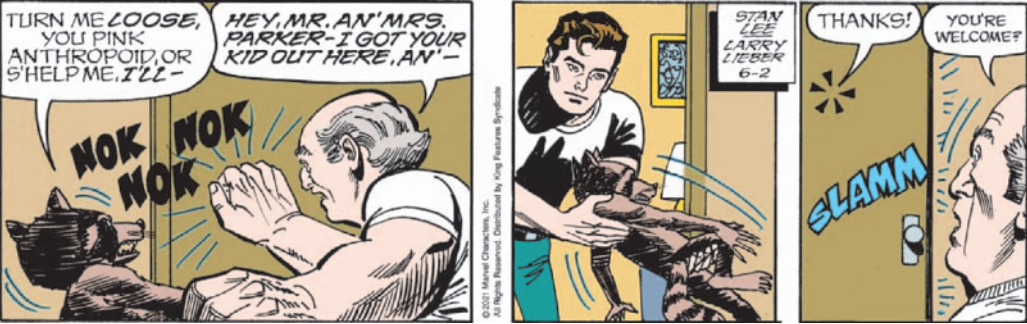
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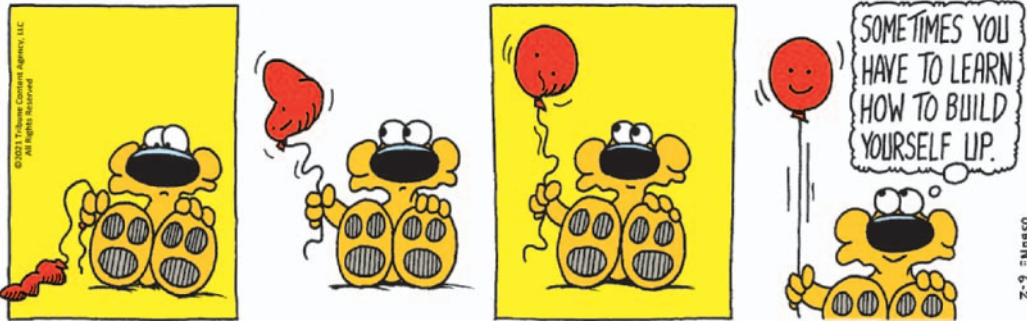
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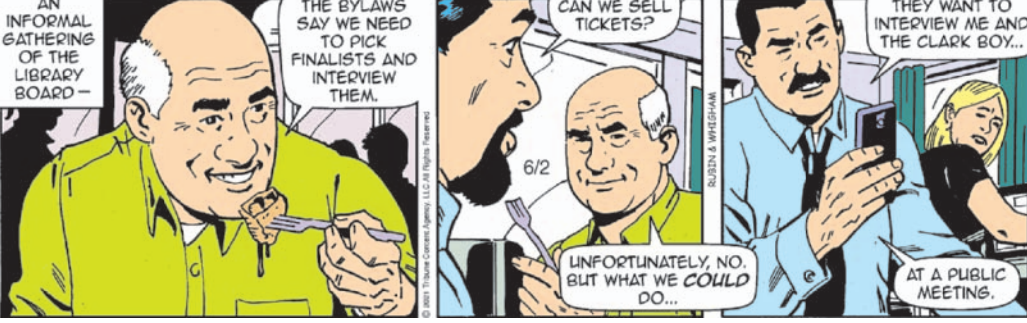
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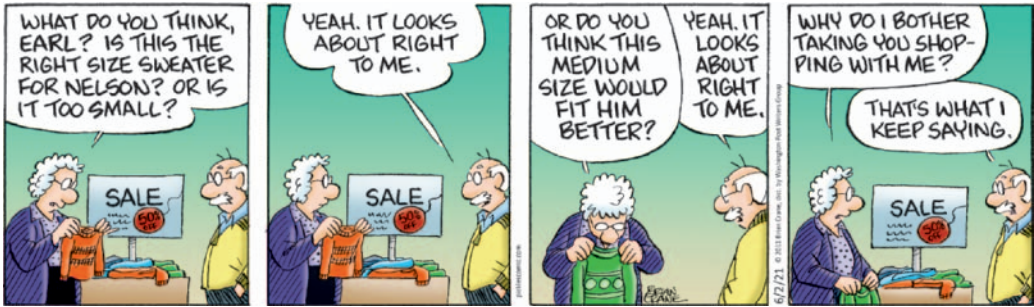
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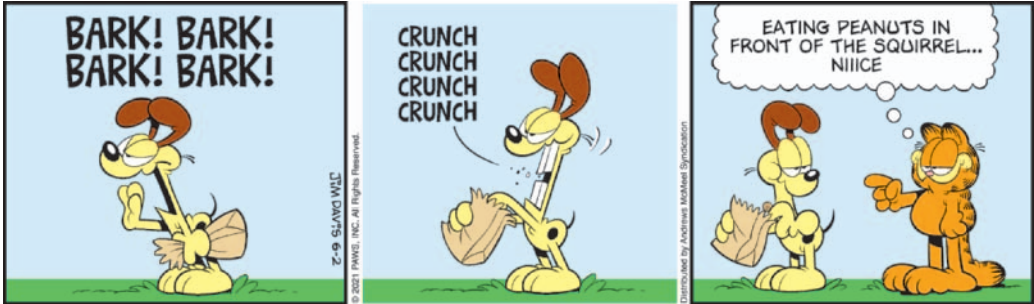
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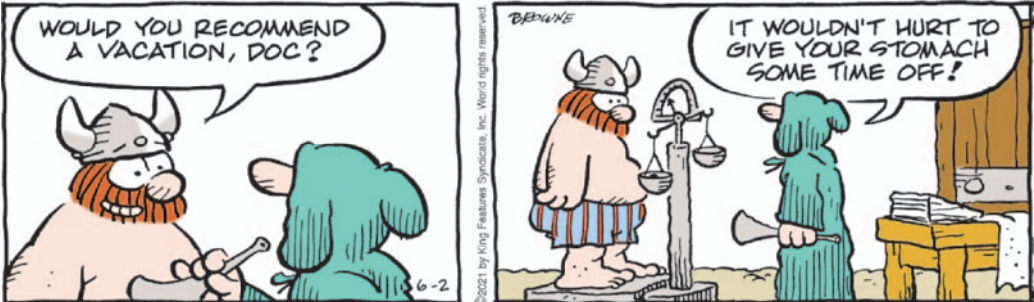
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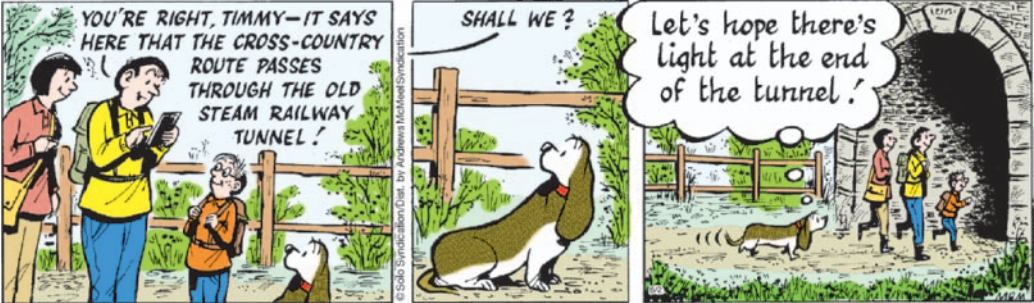
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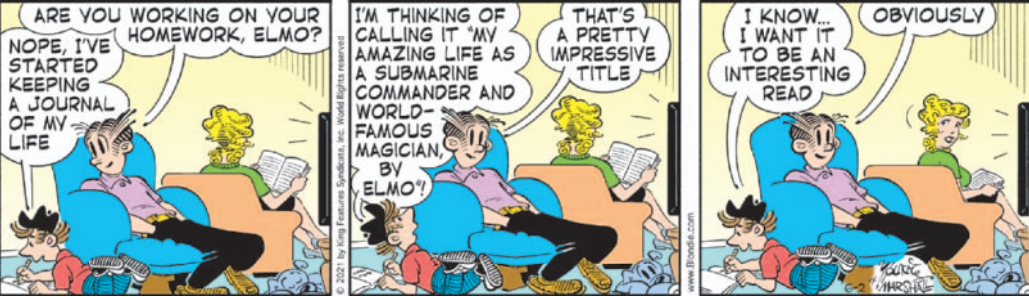
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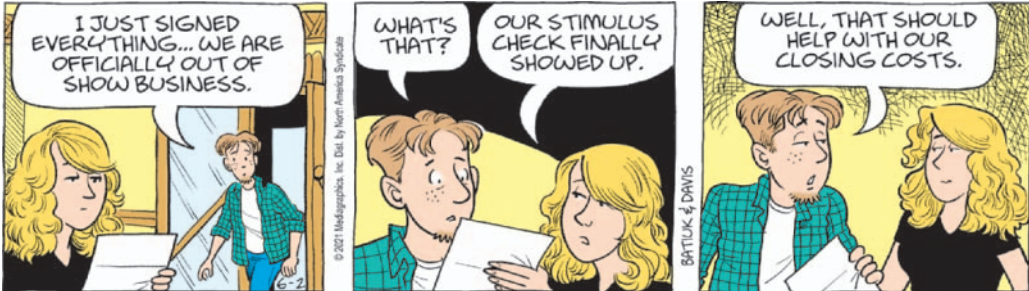
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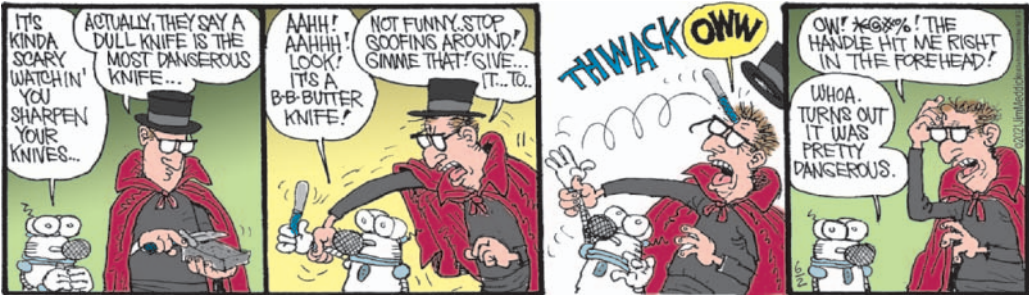
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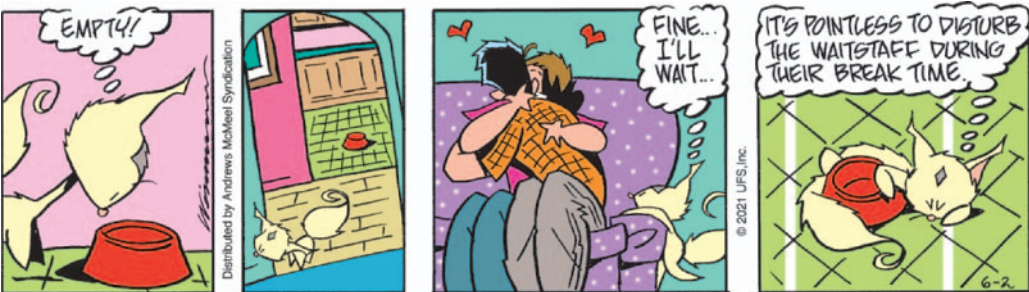
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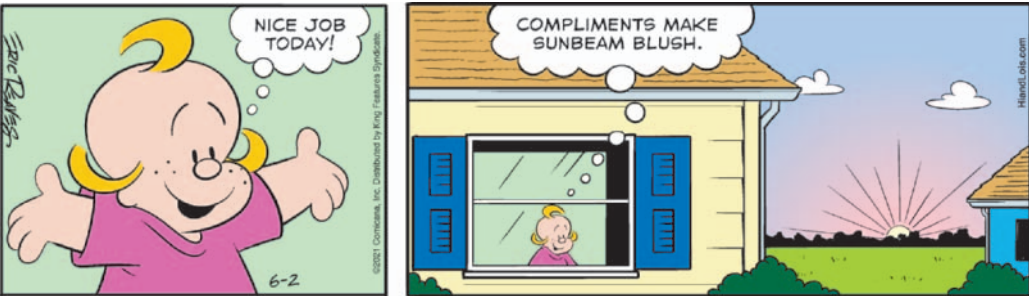
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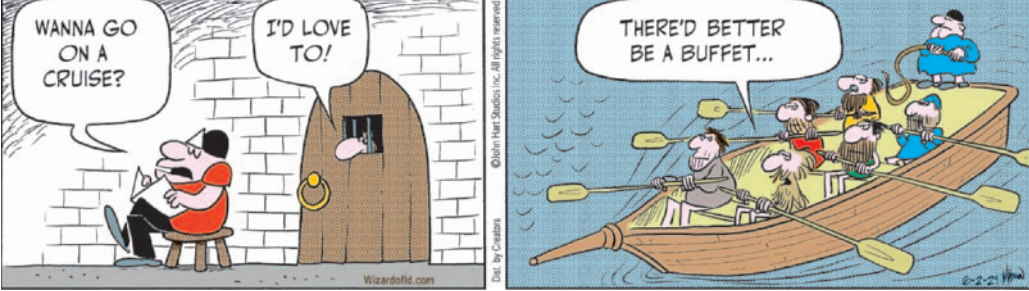
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